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ACCEPTED ADDRESSES

BY

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA,

AUTHOR OF "THE SEVEN SONS OF MAMMON," "DUTCH PICTURES," "THE TWO PRIMA DONNAS," ETC., ETC.

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NARRATIVE OF AN EXTRAORDINARY PASSAGE

IN THE

LIFE OF MR. JOHN TIDYSHOES,

OF LONDON.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, AND PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

THE Tidyshoes have ever been a respectable family; and are, I have been given to understand, of considerable antiquity. We scorn the hacknied boast of having come over with the Conqueror, satisfied as we are of having been established here for a long time before the Conqueror thought of coming over at all. If the Tidyshoes are not mentioned in Doomsday Book, it is very certain that they ought to have been; and if there have never been any lords in our family, it is equally certain that no Tidyshoes has ever suffered death at the hands of the public executioner, which is more than the Howards, or the Talbots, or the Vere de Veres, can say.

My name is John Tidyshoes, and my father's name was John before me. He was a warehouseman in Milk Street, Cheapside; and so am I at this present writing, intending to leave my business to my son John, who is now studying commerce in the

house of Messrs. Madapolam and Jacconet, warehousemen, Manchester. There never was a Tidyshoes bankrupt yet; and we have always been respectable people, paying rates and taxes, and adhering to the doctrines of the Church of England.

In these stirring times, when everybody who has anything to tell—from the incidents of a journey to Paris, to the particulars of a murder he witnessed—seems bound to tell it in print, it appears to me that I have a perfect right to give to the public the NARRATIVE OF A VERY EXTRAORDINARY PASSSAGE IN MY LIFE, and which befell me on my wedding-day; just seven years ago, come Christmas.

It is n't about battles or sieges; and it is n't about murder; and it has n't anything to do with ghosts. Least of all, is it in any way connected with politics, with which the Tidyshoes never meddled, refusing, as far back as the fifth and sixth generation, to stand for common councilmen, and having nothing whatever to say to the Lord Mayor. But it is a very extraordinary passage notwithstanding; and though I do n't exactly say that it is the most interesting record of an adventure in the life of a private individual that has ever occurred, I should very much like somebody to show me a more interesting one. My wife and I are never tired of talking about it, and my wife is a sensible woman. My son, too, takes the greatest interest in it; and as he, also, will be married some of these days, it is as much on his account as on my own that I give this narrative to the world. The Tidyshoes were always a well-educated family, and I gained the prize for grammar three years running at Mr. Smith's classical and commercial academy in Christopher Street, Finsbury Square; but woollen goods, you see, are my business, not literature, so I have placed this paper in the hands of Mr. Sala, who comes to dine with me pretty often when he is in London, though he is n't much of a favourite with my wife. He has promised to look at the grammar and rub up the style, and that sort of thing; and when I told him that I wrote for pleasure, not for profit, and that I did n't expect to be paid anything for my article—nay, that I should consider myself his debtor for the trouble he took in revising it, he said that the

expression of such feelings did me honour, and that if the publisher positively insisted on paying for the contribution, he would take care that the money should be bestowed in charity. I suggested that it might be sent as a donation, with my initials, J. T., to the poor-box at the Mansion House police-court; but he said that he knew somebody very poor and quite a deserving object, who wanted money very badly, and to whom the gift would be most welcome, so I let him have his own way, satisfied that he would employ the funds in a proper manner. He is a very singular man, Mr. Sala, and not at all proud, coming to dinner without any nonsensical ceremony. I wish my wife did n't dislike him so much.

I hate long-winded introductions, so I shall just set about saying what I have to say. My father, who was one of the old school, though he was as kind a parent as ever lived, kept rather a tight hand over me, and till I was twenty-six years of age would n't even let me mention such a thing as marriage. There was plenty of time, plenty of time, he always kept saying; and my mother, who sat under Mr. Bowler, who had a little chapel in Honey Lane Market, and was dreadfully evangelical, had made up her mind that marriage was sinful, and courtship carnal, and went on so about weddings being vanity, that I often felt tempted to ask her why she ever got married herself, if it was so sinful. I never was permitted to go to any theatre but Astley's, and my ticket-of-leave to go there, was stopped because my mother read one morning in the play-bill that among the scenes in the circle Mademoiselle Hortense, of Turin, would appear as Columbine on a bare-backed steed. I am sure there was n't any harm in it. Such wrinkled, pinched-up, cross-grained old shrews as we had for maid-servants, you never saw in your life. There was one pretty housemaid, who got in by accident once while my mother was ill at Margate, and my aunt Jemima was keeping house for us; but Mrs. Tidyshoes pretty soon packed off the new maid when she returned to London. She wore ribbons in her cap, I remember, and my mother used to say that she would come to be hanged. I was always expected to be home by ten o'clock at night. I was n't

allowed to smoke, and was strictly forbidden to read novels. I worked very hard in the counting-house on week days, and on Sundays I was expected to accompany my father in the morning to the parish church of St. Duffaboques-under-Crump, in Crump Lane, Cheapside, and my mother in the evening to Mr. Bowler's, in Honey Lane Market. But I was happy enough; for my dear father and mother, Heaven rest their souls! loved me very dearly, and were very kind to me. There was plenty to eat and drink; I didn't care about smoking, because the only pipe of tobacco I ever tried in my life made me awfully sick for a week; I didn't care about companions of my own age, because, to tell the truth, they were rather given to calling me "Spooney" and "Mammy's darling;" and as the Tidyshoes were always remarkable for having very quick tempers, I kept myself to myself as much as possible, to avoid quarrelling. And as I was always fond of business, I stuck to the counting-house, thought our great ledger, with the red back and the brass clasps, the most interesting book in the world, next to the "Pilgrim's Progress" and Foxe's "Book of Martyrs."

But I couldn't think of settling down as an old bachelor altogether; and I told my parents one evening in the summer of 1850 that if they didn't see about getting a wife for me, I would run away to Australia, and marry a young female bush-ranger. There was a dreadful disturbance. My mother compared me to the prodigal son, and my father said I was a disgrace to the family; but they knew I was in the right, and were obliged to give in at last. In fact, both of them must have known for a long time that the thing must come sooner or later, and that I must be married and settled in life—only they wanted to stave it off for as long as they could, partly through unwillingness to part with their only son, and partly through that odd fancy that seems to take people, who, as soon as they get married themselves, try all their might and main to place obstacles in the way of other people getting married.

I had most dutifully expressed my willingness to acquiesce in any matrimonial choice my parents might make for me; and I must confess that I felt rather inclined to regret the pledge I

had given. My mother had more than once hinted that in matrimony, such as it was, happiness was only to be found when one at least was of mature age, and that the union of a parcel of boys and girls was not only silly but sinful. I was seriously afraid that I should be married to some starched old maid, as lean and shrivelled as our servants, and whom I should be told to consider as a person of "mature" age.

But either my father and mother differed in opinion, or my mother herself changed her mind; for it was at length solemnly announced to me that we were to visit a family, on one of whose members my parents' choice had fallen. The Gimps of Finsbury Circus, indeed, the family in question, were of a standing and respectability almost equal to the Tidyshoes. Mr. Gimp had something to do with the corporation. He was n't sword-bearer, and as he was about sixty years old, he could n't have been "sword-bearer's young man;" but he used to wear a very grand dress indeed on Lord Mayor's Day, always went to the Guildhall dinner, and drew seven hundred a year from the City treasury. Envious people used to say sneeringly that all he had to do was to feed the Corporation swans, and take care the Guildhall turtles did n't fly away.

Mrs. Gimp was by birth a Pugg, and was insufferably proud in consequence. I do n't mean that she was a pug-dog, or she had a pug-nose; but she came of the great family of the Puggs of Norfolk, whoever they were. She thought the Tidyshoes immeasurably inferior to her; but my mother let her know a piece of her mind about the Puggs, and threatened to state publicly that in the reign of George the Third a Pugg was tried at the Old Bailey for stealing a goose. I believe the two women always hated one another; but they patched up the quarrel somehow, and pretended to be excellent friends. As for old Mr. Gimp and my father, they got on capitally, being both of the same opinions in politics, insured in the same fire office, and sitting frequently on the same juries.

They had one daughter, Laura; and it was Miss Laura whom my parents had long had in their eye for your humble servant. She was about eighteen seven years ago, and was such

a very little thing, that when she wore a pinafore, which she frequently did, she looked for all the world like a little school-girl. She was *so* pretty. Was! she 's prettier than ever now, and she 's Mrs. Tidyshoes.

She was about the timidest, most nervous, and frightened little creature you ever saw in all your life. She has got over all that now; but seven years ago, if you spoke to her, she began to falter and tremble; and if she happened to have a needle in her hand, or a tea-cup, ten to one she would prick herself with the first or let the second fall to the ground. Even if you looked at her, a blush of so deep a crimson suffused her face, that you could scarcely help looking at her feet, to see if her stockings had n't turned pink. She had a low, soft, rich voice, when she was n't too frightened to speak; and played very prettily on the piano, when she was n't too frightened to put her fingers on the keys; but her principal amusement seemed to be to devour books, when her mamma was not present, and to sit on a low stool at that lady's feet, doing needlework, at other times.

Her parents and mine seemed to have settled the preliminaries among themselves in a very amicable manner. I used to go to tea three times a week, and to dinner every Sunday. Old Gimp used to go to sleep after dinner, and Mrs. Gimp would also disappear—she said, to read Law's "Serious Call;" my mother said, to brag about the Puggs to her cook, and drink cherry-brandy. So that you see I had every reasonable latitude allowed me for what is called courtship. But I did n't get on very fast. Laura was *so* shy, so bashful, so timid. Then she was always reading; and if I took her hand, she trembled so that I thought she was going to faint; and when, after six months' courtship, I screwed up my courage to the sticking-point, and, with the permission of my kind parents, popped the question, she began to cry. I knew she had been brought up very strictly, and in a solitude as complete as that in which my own youth had been passed. She had never been to school, but her mother had crammed her at home with the works of Hannah Moore and the genealogy of those confounded Puggs. Laura

used to be sent to bed at nine o'clock at night, and the servant came ten minutes afterwards to take away her candle. She often, as I have mentioned already, I think, wore a pinafore; and she has told me herself in after times, laughing, that her mother used to whip her till within a month of her being married.

As I have told you, when I popped the question she began to cry, and then there was a scene. How it all came together afterwards I am sure I do n't know. I remember going down on my knees to somebody, and being lectured for half an hour by Mrs. Gimp about those never-ending Puggs. Old Gimp clapped me on the back. My mother wept on my shoulder, and my father signified his intention of taking me into partnership immediately; for previously I had been nothing but his clerk. I was to be married, and I was married, and married I am to this day, I am delighted to say; but I declare solemnly that I do n't know whether Miss Laura ever distinctly said whether she would or would not have me. And the most curious thing is, that Mrs. Tidyshoes is in a similar state of uncertainty as to whether she ever pronounced a distinct negative or an affirmative. But she *meant* to have me all along, she says; and that is quite sufficient.

The two families dined together on Christmas Day. And I was married on the 26th of December—Boxing Day. I was very nervous. My clothes did n't seem to fit me; my mouth was hot and dry; my lips parched; and in the church, the parson, the clerk, and the communion-rails, all seemed to swim before me in a supernatural muddle. I had been feeling so frequently in my waistcoat-pocket to make sure that the wedding-ring was safe, that when the time came to produce it, I found that it had become entangled in the lining. And when at last I did get it out, it slipped from between my trembling fingers, fell, and rolled along the stone pavement of the church. I can hear the clear ring of the metal on the stone now. An old woman in the free seats laughed; and I felt very much as though I should have liked to strangle her; and when at last I had recovered the ring, I felt a strange temptation coming over

me to seize the beadle's cocked hat—for where my own was I had not the slightest notion—and have a run for it. But it was my destiny to be married, and married I was. As for my little wife, she had been fainting away, with intervals of convulsive weeping, all the morning; and when, finally, everybody had signed their names in the register in the vestry, and Mrs. Gimp definitely delivered her daughter over to me, with the reminder that she too, by the mother's side at least, was a Pugg, my poor Laura looked so forlorn, so nervous, and so frightened, that I could scarcely persuade myself that marrying her was not the accomplishment of an act of villany on my part, and that I was not an atrocious scoundrel.

This uneasy sensation pursued me all through the day, and the festivities of the wedding breakfast. The fellow who proposed the bride's health presumed to express a hope that Mrs. Tidyshoes' married life would be one of unmingled felicity—as if I meant to ill-treat her. Old Gimp, who drank too much champagne at breakfast, told me, as we were going away, that he would not have the slightest hesitation in shooting the man who could ill-use his daughter, and my own father shook hands with me rather sternly, and told me to mind what I was about. Whatever had I done? The women made the usual catterwauling at our departure (I am sure there is always a great deal more crying at marriages than at funerals). Mrs. Gimp hung about her daughter's neck quite frantically, and looked at me far more as though I had been a burglar than a bridegroom. At last we got away. I forgot to give the servants any money, and I daresay they abused me heartily, and nobody threw an old shoe after us for luck. It was a very dreary wedding altogether, and as we left Finsbury Circus it began to rain.

It had been arranged long ago by my kind parents that we were to spend the honeymoon at a little freshwater watering-place which I will call Dumdledowndeary, and which lies on the banks of the Thames, just half-way between London and Gravesend. It was an odd place to go to in the depth of winter, and we were only to stop a week there, after all; but my mother

had passed her honeymoon there as a girl, years and years before railways were thought of, my father and my father-in-law both sternly declared honeymoons to be nonsense, and asked why we couldn't begin our married life at once in Milk Street, but the women contrived to have it their own way; and Mrs. Gimp declared that for her daughter to be married without going out of town would be enough to make the deceased Pugg, her mamma, rise in her grave. She was always down upon you with her Puggs, and nonsense. I forgot to say that one of my Laura's bridesmaids was my aunt Jemima, and the other was Miss Macwhackit, who kept a great jail of a school in South Place, Finsbury. This last estimable lady, who was a trifle under six feet high, wore spectacles, and had a nose of the exact colour of well-boiled beetroot, accompanied us in the cab to the railway station at London Bridge. I nearly sneezed my head off with the confounded salts and essences in smelling-bottles, with which she kept pestering my wife, and when she took her leave she left me a packet of tracts.

It was by the two o'clock train that we left London Bridge, and in about three-quarters of an hour, we alighted at the pleasant little station of Dumdledowndeary. It was raining rather heavily then; and the train, which was an express one, was not to stop again before it reached Gravesend. My wife and I had not been very talkative on the journey. In fact, she had remained the greater part of the time huddled up in one corner of the carriage, muffled up in her shawls and cloaks, and with her veil down. There was only one other passenger in the carriage, and a most intelligent person he was. He wore very bushy black moustaches, a great gold chain, and was dressed in the first style of fashion. I think he was what the ladies call an "agreeable rattle," and he rattled away so agreeably on all sorts of topics, particularly as we were passing through the long Blackheath tunnel, that the time seemed nothing, and even my dear little wife condescended to smile from time to time, from beneath her veil. I was glad to see the darling child make some advances towards recovering her spirits, and was telling her so, on the railway platform, just after we had bidden our

agreeable travelling companion good-bye, and the train had moved on, when it occurred to me that I might find a better place to tell her than the open air, while it was raining. There was one fly at the door; a very shaky fly with a most curious-looking horse that was blind of one eye, and appeared to have only three legs; at least I could n't make out where the fourth one was. The driver was a little old man with a very bad temper, who inaugurated our acquaintance by vowing that he would be "biled in ile afore he 'd stir a hinch under 'arf-a-crown." He lowered his tone, and his price too, when I told him that I was going to the "Yacht" (my mother had told me to go to the "Yacht," remembering the name of an inn, after all these years!) to which establishment it appeared he was attached in the capacity of hostler. He drove us through an odd jumble of tumble-down cottages, brick-fields, and broken up fishing vessels lying rotting in the mud, which, I am afraid, gave my wife but a poor idea of Dumdledowndeary as a watering-place, and stopped at last before a long, low, whitewashed building with a thatched roof, which was situated on the common hard, and directly fronted the river. There was a sign-post before the house, in whose irons swung a painted representation of the "Yacht," which creaked very dismally. Some bargemen were quarrelling outside the door about a stone bottle, and some other persons—mariners by profession, I should imagine—were groaning out an uncomfortable chorus about the "salt, salt seas" in some other portion of the building. Altogether, the "Yacht" seemed about the very worst place a married couple could come to, to spend the honeymoon.

The person who was licensed to sell wines and spirits, and gave entertainment to man and beast at the "Yacht," was Ann Griddell, and it was Mrs. Griddell herself, so the ill-tempered flyman told us, who was standing at the inn door with her arms akimbo, looking at the weather and the bargemen, as we drove up. She did not seem to think much of either, or indeed of us, and shook her head very superciliously as the flyman touched his hat, and told her that this "were hall from that rubbishin' train."

I ordered apartments; saw the luggage taken in; bustled about, and tried to give myself as much importance as possible; but the wind, to use a nautical expression, was taken completely out of my sails by Mrs. Griddell, who surveyed all the operations in progress, always with her arms akimbo, shaking her head from time to time, and staring, first at me and then at my wife. I bore all this very patiently for some time; but when at last we were installed in a sitting-room with a bulging ceiling and a creaking floor—a room full of draughts, and with a chimney that smoked abominably, and I found Mrs. Griddell still standing with her arms akimbo, shaking her head and staring at us—I took the liberty of telling her that if she had no objection we would rather be alone.

"Alone! ha! Oh yes!" replied Mrs. Griddell, without removing her arms in the least from their akimbo position. "Alone! Certainly. I'm a goin'."

But she did not go, and she did not leave off shaking her head and staring at us. It was very unpleasant.

"What 'll ye have for dinner?" she cried out suddenly, and with such a loud, harsh emphasis, that my wife started and trembled, and I thought she was going to cry again.

I glanced at Laura, to seek counsel about the dinner; but there was nothing to be got from her, except frightened looks, and an indistinct murmur. I plucked up courage, then, myself, and boldly suggested a bit of fish and a veal cutlet.

"No, you do n't," said Mrs. Griddell.

"Do n't what?" I asked.

"Do n't 'ave any fish, 'cause there aint none; and as to a weal cutlit, well you oughter know, and well you oughter to consider, that Teddy Slap, the butcher, is a willin, and if a cutlit of his crosses my doorpost, I 'm a Dutchman."

"A boiled fowl," I interposed.

"If you even smells such a thing in this 'ouse," replied Mrs. Griddell, "I 'll——"

Whatever she may have been going to say matters little; but my wife gave a little scream, and I ordered the woman, with as much dignity as I could assume, to leave the room, if she could not behave herself; but she did not budge one inch.

"You don't want no fish and weal cutlits, and sich rubbish," Mrs. Griddell resumed, with perfect equanimity. "You don't want no boiled fowls. No; nor mushrooms neither. I 'll tell you what you want. You want a nice hot cup of tea for that poor dear blessed darlin', along with a roasted crumpit and a mossle of Dorsit butter."

"A cup of tea is all very well," I said impatiently. "At any rate, we shall want some dinner afterwards. But get us whatever you like; and don't annoy us, pray."

Mrs. Griddell shook her head more violently than ever; stared, if possible, harder than she had done before at me and my wife, and at length took her departure. I was very glad of it, for, to tell the truth, she rather frightened me, and I was undecided whether to pronounce her very drunk or a little mad.

This was n't a very encouraging commencement to a honeymoon, and my wife seemed to be also of that opinion, for, as she sat by the fire reading—the only book at the "Yacht" was an odd volume of the "Rambler"—I noticed that she let fall a tear rather frequently on the page. Of course it was my duty to console her, and I thought the best way was to kiss her tears away. I put my arm round her waist, and drew her towards me; but she turned her face away; and I had to struggle rather harder than I liked for the kiss.

"My darling Laura," I said, in a tone of gentle remonstrance.

"Oh, don't, don't," my wife whimpered; "oh, go away, do!"

"Go away where?" I asked, rather crossly.

"Oh! anywhere. Oh! let me go away from this dreadful house. Oh! I 'm so frightened. Let me go away; let me go to my mamma!"

"I think it 's a pity you ever went away from her, ma'am," I retorted, sharply, for I felt the blood of the Tidyshoes rising within me, "if this is the way you treat your husband."

"Oh! pardon me; do forgive me, pray," my little wife sobbed out. "I like you very much, but I 'm so frightened; please go away, do!"

"Well," I answered, as good-humouredly as I could, "I 'll

go and take a walk, if you like. It's raining hard, to be sure; and I do n't know exactly which way to walk, except into the river. I wish my mother had sent us to a more cheerful place. Shall I go away, Laura, dear?"

I put my arm round her waist and tried to kiss her again; when, upon my word and honour, she not only struggled, but she gave a piercing scream, and broke away from me.

"Good heavens, Laura!" I cried out, "whatever is the matter with you?"

"Oh, go away; pray do," she repeated. "Oh! you 're so rough. You 're not like the Troubadours. Oh dear! oh dear! Why is n't he like the Troubadours?"

"Hang the Troubadours!" I roared out, the Tidyshoes blood getting the mastery of me. "Aint you my wife, ma'am? What did you marry me for?"

"Mamma, mamma!" my interesting spouse began to scream. "Oh, mamma, mamma! come and take me away from this bad man."

"Will you listen to me, madam?" I exclaimed, and I am afraid too that I swore a little; "will you listen to me, if you 're not out of your senses?"

My wife hid her face in her little hands and sobbed.

"Laura, dearest," I continued, soothingly; but she only moaned again, and muttered that eternal "Go away!"

I lost my temper again; and I am sorry to say that I was rude enough to tell my wife that she was a fool—I am afraid there was an adjective prefixed to the epithet—and to demolish a work-table with a blow of my fist.

What do you think my wife did? As true as my name is Tidyshoes, she threw herself down on the carpet, and went into the most violent fit of hysterics I ever heard or saw. When the blood of the Tidyshoes is up, we do n't much mind what we do; and I let my wife scream and yell as much as ever she liked, and set to work on my own account breaking the furniture. There was a very fine old punch-bowl in a recess in one corner, with a lot more china, and glass, and things, and I made a clean sweep of them off-hand. I think the oval mirror over the mantelpiece

would have gone next, but the noise we raised brought up Mrs. Griddell, the ill-tempered fly-driver, and a maid-servant with a red head and very dirty face, which was in shape exactly like a kidney potatoe.

"Upon my word, pretty doin's," Mrs. Griddell exclaimed; "you're a pretty feller"—this was to me—"with your weal cutlits, your brilings, and your rilings, and botherations. Poor blessed sufferin' babby"—this was to my wife;—"take her hunder the harms, Fender"—this was to the maid-servant with the face like a kidney potatoe.

They between them managed to restore my wife to consciousness, and the servant with the red head being despatched down stairs, returned with hartshorn, and burnt feathers, and that sort of thing. I had quite cooled down by this time, and went over to where my wife was lying on the sofa to take her hand and make it up. But at the very sight of me she gave such unmistakeable signs of a returning fit of hysterics, that I thought, for peace and quietness' sake, it would be better to leave her alone for an hour or so. I put on my hat and made for the door; but I had reckoned without my hostess, Mrs. Griddell, who deliberately put her back against the door and shook her head like a Chinese mandarin.

"No, you don't," said Mrs. Griddell. "Josiah's a constable, and I'll have you in the cage, my Jackey."

"Nonsense," I replied, quite good-naturedly. "My name is n't Jackey, to begin with, and the table and glass shall be paid for, of course. Put them down in the bill; and let me out, if you please."

"If you leave this 'ouse without the 'andcuffs on," replied this inexplicable landlady, "I'll swallow a live hedgehog. I'll teach yer to ill-treat a hunprotected female, you monster, you."

Here my wife interposed feebly from the sofa, "That she did not think I was a monster, but that I was cruel, very cruel." And she sobbed as though her little heart would break.

"There, my good woman," I was beginning to Mrs. Griddell——

"Don't call me a good woman," interrupted the landlady,

fiercely. "I 'll good woman you. I 'll lamb you, I will, you stuck-up monkey."

"What on earth does all this mean?" I shrieked out in desperation. "The china's broken, and I 'll pay for it. Make out your infernal bill, and I 'll pay it. I won't stop in your house. I 'm sorry I ever came into it. Confound your house, and you too. Leave the room—woman, do you hear—and bring me your bill."

But Mrs. Griddell was not to be moved. Not a finger moved of the hands attached to those arms which were still akimbo; and she shook her head with a diabolical increase of speed that nearly drove me mad.

"You 're a nice man, you are," she remarked. "I suppose you 'll tell me next that you 're the 'usband of this dear, sufferin', blessed babby."

"The husband of that lady? why, of course I am."

"You her 'usband! As much her 'usband as you 're mine. Show me your 'stificate. Show me your 'stificate. Show me your marriage lines, you warmint. Show 'em, or you shall prove her your wife to the jestices."

The demand was so ridiculous that I felt at first half inclined to grant it, and so put an end at once to this absurd quarrel. But the woman's impertinence was a little too much to be borne; and the Tidyshoes are not accustomed to have liberties taken with them; so I told her haughtily that my word was quite sufficient, and again desired her to leave the room.

"Leave the room I can 't, and leave the room I won't, afore I see that 'stificate."

"I tell you she 's my wife. Laura, my dear, will you satisfy this good lady that I am your husband? Perhaps you would like to see her wedding-ring? Laura, show the third finger of your left hand, if you do n't mind the trouble, my darling."

You see I was speaking quite calmly and sarcastically. The Tidyshoes were always sarcastic when they liked. But, calm and sarcastic as I was, I never felt such an inclination in my life to throw any one out of the widow as I did to pitch Mrs. Griddell out of the bow-window of the "Yacht" inn, Dumbledowndeary.

"I'll tell you what it is, young gent," Mrs. Griddell resumed, "I don't no more believe that you're married to that blessed creetur as is a lyin' on that sofa—bless her little 'art, which is broke by your mealy-mouthed perdictions, you conoodling willin. You've elipsed with her, you 'ave, you Gog and Magog dewourin' fiend, you."

"Elipsed! what do you mean?"

"Elipsed! Well, what was I saying? Collapsed, I mean. No; it is n't that. Now I've got it. It's eloped. This is an elopement. You've run away with her, you have. This is an Old Bailey case. This is a transportation job. Josiah knowed it as soon as hever he druv you from the station. You've run away with her for the sake of her property. I know she's got property, and it's for that you've taken her away, you designing crocodile. Show your 'stificate, or up you goes before Squire Brumm, the jestice. I'll have no such carryin's on in my house. Show your 'stificate, I say!"

I was so annoyed, so incensed by this preposterous woman's persecution, that I thought it best to put an end to them at once for all; so I put my hand in my pocket to pull out the marriage-certificate, which I had received in the vestry-room of the church that morning, and had very carefully placed in my purse.

Good gracious!

When I say good gracious, I mean it. If you had received the shock I received at that moment, you would have cried out good gracious too.

I had lost my purse—money, banknotes, marriage-certificate, and all. Lost it? Robbed of it, I mean. I knew at once who had done it. It was that rascally fellow in the train who was such an agreeable rattle, and who had talked so amusingly, who had robbed me. That was plain. So I thought the best thing I could do was to tell Mrs. Griddell at once.

"I've been robbed," I said. "Robbed of every penny. I must go to London at once."

"Go to London? Go to Botany Bay, you mean," screamed this horrible woman. "I thought it would come to this. You have n't got a penny, have n't you? and you've eloped with this

poor dear darlin'. Oh, you wretch! Oh, you ruffian! Josiah, get your staff. Help! Help! Murder! Thieves! fire-i-i-re!"

She began to scream about twenty times louder than my wife, who, taking up the cue, began to scream too. I was desperate. The Tidyshoes are desperate sometimes; and when they're desperate, they're dreadful. I had been so worried and persecuted during the last half-hour that I was determined to make an end of it; and if I remained a bachelor, and never saw my wife again, to get out of this villanous "Yacht." So I folded my arms, and made a rush at the door, like a bull.

As I was rushing out I came into violent collision with, and was half knocked down by, somebody who was rushing in.

Who was it, do you think? The parish constable? Squire Brumm, the justice? No; heaven be thanked! it was my dear father; and beaming behind him was my dear, good old mother.

The worthy souls had not been able to rest after the departure of their darling. More than this, my mother had recollected that the "Yacht" was not the house after all that she had spent the honeymoon at; and I do think that she had made that an excuse to persuade my father to come down and see how we were getting on. They could not have arrived at a better time, I am sure.

They satisfied Mrs. Griddell both as to my title to my wife's hand and as to her broken china. And more than this, we all went back in the rickety fly to the station, having made up our minds to leave Dumbledowndeary alone, and spend the remainder of our honeymoon in Milk Street, Cheapside, London.

But the best was yet to come. On the way back to town my dear darling wife positively begged me to forgive her, and told me that she loved me very much indeed, and it was only because she was such a foolish, inexperienced little girl, and because she was so frightened, that she had screamed when I attempted to kiss her. And I beg to say that she got over her fright—for good and all—before she was many hours older; and from that time to this, she has never shown the slightest symptom of being afraid of me. Indeed, people do go so far as to say that I am afraid of her; though of course that is n't true.

So ended this most Extraordinary Passage in my life—my married life I ought to have said—and if the story requires a moral, perhaps the best one I could give would be: never to be married on boxing-day, and never to spend your honeymoon at the "Yacht" Inn, Dumbledowndeary.

FIVE ACTS.

A STORY THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TRUE.

I.

THERE is probably no one of those personages who, from what they do, or are supposed to do, are called "public characters," about whose real habits and manner of life so little is known as the dramatic author. It seems to be a traditional fatality, that because the greatest dramatist the world ever saw led a life on which the most erudite and industrious antiquaries and commentators have not been able to throw much more light, beyond the facts that he was born and died at Stratford-on-Avon, and that he wrote those magnificent works that will last to the end of time: it seems to be accepted and settled, that because our Shakespere's life and almost lineage are enveloped in obscurity and uncertainty, that the dramatist of our own days must remain a mysterious, almost mythical, person—a sort of Thespian "Mrs. Harris;" to some, in his individuality, as extinct as the ibis—to others, as fabulous as the phœnix. Indeed, many shrewd persons do not believe in the corporeal existence of dramatic authors at all. They imagine such plays as "The Wife's Secret," or the "Lady of Lyons," to be things "got up behind the scenes" by a species of Vehmgericht, composed of the stage manager, the prompter, the scene-painter, and the call-boy. Those who *do* recognise as a *fait accompli* that dramatists are living people,

who write plays with their own hands, and put the money received for them into their own pockets, entertain two arbitrary hypotheses respecting their habitual appearance in the flesh. According to the first, dramatists are desperately "seedy," care-worn, lank-visaged individuals, always clad in cloaks with poodle collars, shrunk tweed trousers, patched highlows, and napless hats, in which they carry blue cotton pocket-handkerchiefs with white spots, and dogs'-eared manuscripts of five-act tragedies. According to the second hypothesis, dramatists are roaring, reckless, jovial "fast-men," who slap managers on the back, drive about in tearing cabs with blood horses, live on the most cayenne-peppery of broiled bones and devilled kidneys, the creamiest of champagne, and the "hoppiest" of pale ale; walk arm-in-arm with captains in the guards, belong to unnumbered clubs, and are the beneficent centres of brilliant constellations of "stars of the ballet," all pink tights and spangles.

I wonder whether either of these hypotheses be true, and if so, which; I wonder, for though "behind the scenes" is a realm familiar to me, and though I ought properly, in my time, to have known dramatists galore, I cannot to this day exactly make out what manner of men they really be? whether they be "fast" men or "slow" men, men who live on their wits, or on the wits, or the want of wits, of others—where they live, how they live, and if they live at all. I have attended the first representations of new pieces, and have seen a personage in evening costume cross the stage, or bow from a private box (the last in a very nervous, shaky, oblique manner, and much resembling the salutation of Mr. Punch from his "public" box). I have seen these gentlemen "come like shadows, and so depart," in response to the call for the "author." I have afterwards supped at the "Albion," and have seen something, in the ruins of evening costume, doubled up in the corner of a box, and too drunk to be disorderly; and have been told by the waiter in a confidential manner, that the grog-soddened carrion there was "Mr. H——, sir; very far gone, sir; yes, sir:" but *how was I to know* for a certainty that these nebulous appearances were real dramatists? It resolves itself into the old state of doubt into which Arch-

bishop Whately leads us respecting Napoleon Bonaparte. How are we to *know* that yonder man in the cocked hat and gray coat is the emperor and king and conqueror? I am not very certain about anything myself. There is a person who wears my clothes, sleeps in my bed, eats my dinner, and is good enough to write my works on science and philosophy for me, whom I can't make out at all. To-day, I put him down as the worst of what the Americans term "bad eggs;" to-morrow, I may consider him an ornament to his species. I am sorry to say that the first of these two theories is the one ordinarily indulged in by the acquaintances of the person in question. But dramatic authors puzzle me even more than my——, that is, than that other person. One I know who is considered to be perhaps the most prolific and successful playwright of the day. He does a great deal in the way of adaptations from the French; and yet I have been told that he does not know a word of that language; and that his screaming farces are "put out," like linen for the wash; and come home from the washerwoman starched and mangled at the rate of a pound an act paid to the laundress. Fancy such a washing-bill—

One fars	£ 1
Three comick ax	3
Five tragick ditter	5
One pare burlesk ditter	2
	£11

(The reader will observe that I have made use of the orthodox laundress, or "one pare of sox," orthography.) Another dramatist I know who has received more sums in one single year for writing plays (and of the fact of his having done so there can be no reasonable doubt), than many other dramatic authors receive in five, and yet not one of his plays has yet been acted. Another dramatist I have heard of (I am happy to say, that I never had the displeasure of his acquaintance) turned out simply to be a swindler, and was transported accordingly; and another, the writer of a really beautiful sentimental drama, I have discovered lately to be—not an author, but an ass.

So I am not going to cry "Eureka!" because I am about to tell the slightest of "storiettes" about a dramatic author I might or might not have known—who might or might not have lived at all—whose life-drama might or might not have been enacted here in London, or in the island of Utopia, or in the kingdom of Prester John, or in the "Weissnichtvo" of the Sartor Resartus, or in the Fiddler's Green, or in the Land of Nod. But the story *might* have been true. That is all I have to say. The rest, my readers, I leave to you.

Once upon a time—a century, a year, a week ago—there lived (we will say in London), and lived a very hard-up life too, a certain man of the land of Middlesex, called John Ebury—John Ebury, to the editors of playbills (for he was a dramatist of some renown) and the printers of his books—John Ebury to the police inspectors who made out charge-sheets, and the fillers up of *ca sas* directing the sheriff of Middlesex to "take the body of John Ebury wherever he might be found running up and down on his bailliewick, and him safely keep"—to the public, John Ebury, but to public-houses and his friends, plain "Jack." He was one of those men you *must* call by a familiar diminutive, like "Jack Falstaff," "Tom d'Urfey," "Sam Cowell," and "Billy Black." They might just as well have christened John Ebury, Jack: it would have saved trouble. He was, as I have said, a dramatist; but he had been, many years before, a gentleman. The junior scion of an exceedingly poor and proud family, he had been educated, and nurtured, and coddled, and *choyé*, as though he had been heir to a fortune equivalent to Mr. Sam Warren's (another man you must call "Sam," but this time derisively, you know not why) famous Titmousian inheritance; coming of age, he found himself entitled to an income nearly equal in amount to that which is known in nautical parlance as "midshipman's half-pay," which consists, I believe, of "nothing a year, and find yourself." He was sent to Eton, when, with his expectations, or rather non-expectations, St. Giles's parochial schools would have been a seminary more suitable for him. His unpaid scores for jam-tarts and rum shrub "are extant to this day," as the great historian, Lord Macaulay, was so fond

of telling us, as if anything—the present tense being used—could be extant till yesterday. He was sent to Oxford when he ought to have been sent to earn his living, and where he "made debts" which his parents promised to pay, and did n't, which pursued him through life. After having lost his voice in holloaing, and singing anthems;—after having seen life, the sight of which comedy very nearly caused him to see that kindred performance—Death; after having gone through almost everything—except the Insolvent Court (he went through that afterwards), he found that his family, having never done him anything but harm, were virtuously determined not to do him any good, but sternly to repudiate him: which was done in all the forms in those cases made and provided. Having thus become a "black sheep"—(because nobody had ever washed his fleece for him properly when he was a lamb); being quite full of classical learning, most useful had he been differently circumstanced—quite useless to him placed as he was; being also suffused with expensive ideas and indolent habits—with contempt for those beneath him, and hatred of those above him—he led for some time, with indifferent success, the life of a gentleman upon town. Now, a gentleman with no money and with exhausted credit, is in about the same moral position as the fox in the fable that had lost (the fox, not the fable) his tail, or the ticket-of-leave man of the present day. No one will have anything to do with him. He is an object of continual suspicion. He is mistrusted alike by the society that has cast him off, and the society that wo n't take him on. People tell him that he ought to be ashamed to beg, and that it is no use his trying to dig, for he ca n't. "If I were not," says Charles Lamb, "the independent gentleman I am, I would be a beggar." I think myself that the position of a beggar is about eight hundred times preferable to that of a *dependent* gentleman.

II.

An old proverb says that "what is enough for one is enough for two." There is another proverb, certainly as old though not so well known, but far more frequently acted upon, that "what

is *not* enough for one is also enough for two." Following out the instructions of these words of wisdom, Jack Ebury, not having enough, or indeed anything for himself, hastened to take unto himself, to wife, a young and beautiful lady whose resources amounted exactly to the sum total of his own. He had nothing; she had nothing; they had nothing. The young lady's family, horrified and indignant that their daughter should espouse a reprobate—poor Jack had never done anything particular, since the first follies of youth, save not to pay because he had no money—availed themselves of the occurrence to repudiate her also; and I daresay that Jack's family and Agnes's family (that was her pretty name) rubbed their hands with much complacency afterwards, and thought they had made rather a good thing of it in getting financially rid of two members of the surplus population. It was believed indeed in polite circles that Agnes's papa—he was a live baronet—would go to heaven—generally, of course, on the score of his baronetcy, but specially on account of his having laid his hand on his waistcoat, and declared that were his daughter starving he would not give her eighteenpence. Strength of character, it was called. Things are called by strange names, to be sure.

The young wife immediately betook herself to the task of bearing children to the lord she loved so well. It would be an exaggeration to say that she loved the ground he walked upon, but she certainly did idolise the coat he wore, and was once caught kissing it. The task of filling her husband's quiver with those little pink-shafted, curly-feathered arrows you are aware of, she accomplished with such regularity and rapidity (orders for twins being executed with promptitude and despatch) that, so to speak, before Jack could add to his Christian name the speed-denoting patronymic of Robinson, there had grown around him an astonishing number of small living shoemakers', greengrocers', and bakers' bills. It seemed only yesterday that he was a young man whose family had cast him off; and now he was a middle-aged man; with a family he could not cast off—nor wish to cast off, honest fellow—for he loved all his children dearly, from his dashing eldest daughter (he had in time a daughter who

was dashing, and had nothing to dash upon) down to the idiot boy in the corner, who had those epileptic fits, and who cried so bitterly when the brokers were in, and there was no bread.

For, to an abundance of brokers and a paucity of bread Jack had speedily come. It was marvellous to see with what rapidity the gentility, the pride, the ignorance of indigence had been cast to the winds; with what lightning swiftness the young buck, spruce though in debt, fastidious though embarrassed, proud though penniless, had sunk into the shambling, careworn, two-pair-back-dwelling, pawnshop-haunting, almost ragged man; with gray hairs in his head, and something very near akin to despair in his heart. Jack Ebury of the club, became Jack Ebury of the bar of the beershop in the court; Jack Ebury, who dined at the "Trafalgar" on whiting-puddings, lobster-balls, devilled whitebait, and Badminton, became Jack Ebury who brought home fried-fish in his coat-pocket to his family, who sent Polly, his second, not to Madame Michau's dancing-academy, or to the Stoke-Pogis Ladies' College, but to Miss Tickletoby's twopenny day-school. Jack Ebury, who had chambers in St. James's (he did n't pay his rent there, it must be acknowledged,) became Jack Ebury who lived in Crooked Court, (which, as all men know, was over against the Royal Roscius Theatre, in Toppleton Street,) and did n't pay his rent there. He could n't pay it at either lodging, but he could n't pay it more than ever in Crooked Court.

And Mrs. Ebury—Agnes—the live baronet's daughter, who had been "lapped in luxury," with a French governess, a hundred-guinea harp, an Erard's grand—Pappadaggi to teach her singing—a carriage, a saddle-horse—Raffle, A.R.A., to instruct her in drawing—M'Tishon, R.A., to paint her portrait—Fyddyas, the sculptor, to model her bust; a Blenheim spaniel, a jewel-box, a milliner's bill, and a cherry-coloured flunky (I allude to the plush) specially affected to her service. What did Mrs. Ebury do? This. She washed her children's clothes. I think, would Jack have allowed her to do it, she would have taken in "families' washing" into the bargain, or have had a mangle on the ground-floor of Crooked Court. I am sure Jack would have

turned it for her. She scrubbed; she darned; she mended Jack's clothes; she persuaded him to take long walks, and come home late to dinner, because there was enough food for the children and for him, and not enough for her, and she could tell him that she had dined early. This brave woman was ashamed and afraid of nothing save dishonesty. She was ashamed neither of the pawnshops frequented by the family, nor of the mean rooms they inhabited, nor of the bare floors, nor of the fried fish, nor of the patched and faded garments she went in, nor of poverty, nor of contempt, nor of meeting those who had known her in prosperity. She wept sometimes to think her husband was no longer the gallant, sprightly, handsome man she had known him once; she wept to see her children go more like little ragamuffins than little gentlemen and ladies. But, for herself, she never wept, never repined, as she never either faltered, or looked back, or regretted the state of life into which it had pleased Heaven to call her. When such women as these die, there are no Ben Jonsons to write epitaphs over them as over "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother," and say that, when Death strikes another fair and wise and good as they, Time shall throw a dart at them. They die and are forgotten, or are spoken of casually as women good enough, but devoid of proper pride.

III.

You will ask me how, even in this miserable Crooked Court existence, Jack Ebury managed to keep out of the workhouse. I will tell you. There is a profession, or trade, or calling, or mode of money-getting, for which no previous training, apprenticeship, or preparation is required. It is a state into which men fall—they do not assume it, they are not called to it by diploma. It is open to all. The bankrupt schoolmaster, the discarded, unjust counting-house clerk, the insolvent horse-dealer, the cashiered captain, the "sticket stibbler," the unsuccessful actor, the "plucked" medical student, the expelled under-graduate—all these it welcomes with open arms. It is a profession of which one of its most brilliant professors said,

seventy years ago, that "were he to see a favourite brother, or a dear friend, looking to it as a means of livelihood, he would sooner see him sweeping the streets than devoting himself to a way of life that must inevitably end in wailing and gnashing of teeth, and irremediable despair." This profession is called Literature, and Jack Ebury took to it kindly. He "turned author." Men "turn" this profession—they do not "become" authors, they "turn" so.

He had a quick wit, a ready imagination, a considerable acquaintance with life, and some learning, and he soon found employment. It was about this time that he began to be called "Unlucky Jack Ebury." He committed, at the outset of his career, the fatal error of imagining that it is beneath the "dignity of literature" to write for newspapers, and having contemptuously refused some offers of an introduction into the realms of journalism, he found afterwards, when his proud stomach had been brought down, and he had supped heartily off the "meal of chaff," recommended by "Mr. F.'s aunt" to Arthur Clennam, that others had gone before him through the gate of Horn of the newspaper office, and that it was no use his knocking at *that* door. So he betook himself to the Ivory gate of bookwork. There are three degrees in the royal arch of letters. That of the colossal novelist, who earns his thousands; that of the journalist, who writes good books in his leisure hours, and enjoys his hundreds; and that of the miserable hack. "Unlucky Jack Ebury" "went in" (for you elect yourself, and are not elected) for the third degree. He speedily took the level of Ned Purdon, who, according to Goldsmith, "once was a bookseller's hack," and led such a horrible—Oliver's adjective is stronger—life in this world, that he didn't think he 'd wish to come back. And the hack degree accounts for Crooked Court, the wash-tub, the pawnshop, and the fried fish.

Jack, I have said, was a loving husband. He was a faithful one, and, as times went, a steady one. But he was a "muddler." He didn't get tipsy once in three months; but when he did it, was always where somebody could see him, and always when the last and most important part of a work was being anxiously ex-

pected by the bookseller. He muddled away his time, his temper, his money, his energies, his opportunities, everything. He was as one who has been born an hour too soon, and, like a tired sleeper, disturbed too early, goes drowsy through life.

When Jack's head was getting seriously gray, and his back unmistakeably bent—he had not turned the corner of forty yet —he was advised by a friend who could n't write himself, but made a handsome income by saying that he did, to "try his luck on the stage"—in other words, to become a dramatic author. After some nine months' hesitation, something like resolution was born in Jack's mind, and he wrote a farce. After much waiting about at stage-doors, and pestering managers, and deferring of hope that made his heart very sick, Jack's farce was not only read but accepted—not only accepted but produced; and more than all this, it achieved very considerable success. Jack wrote another, and another, and a good many more—some original, some translations—and for different theatres. They were subject to the usual averages of theatrical successes. Some of the worst became popular favourites, and some of the best were damned. He got some fame, and a little money, by these opuscules—and the first he muddled away, as he did the last.

Said the friend who could n't write, but said he did (his name was Pruffle)—

"Jack, here's a chance for you. Loggie wants to open the R. R. for the winter season with a five-act comedy. Why the deuce do n't you go in and win—(a familiar man was Pruffle)—and I can tell you in confidence that Loggie is ready, nay eager, to take anything you like to send him. You have four months to do it in; now, why do n't you do it?"

"I will do it," cried Unlucky Jack Ebury, striking the crazy table in Crooked Court, on which Jack's youngest was drumming with a knife and fork, hopefully expectant of a mid-day meal, which did not always make its appearance at that summons.

"You wo n't," said Mr. Pruffle, wagging his head, half doubtfully, half interrogatively.

"See if I do n't," retorted the other sternly and resolutely. And this was all that passed between the friends.

IV.

Now the R. R. was the Royal Roscius Theatre, which, as you have already heard, was situated in Toppleton Street; and the grand box entrance was exactly opposite to Crooked Court, at whose left-hand corner house—once second floor back, now (since the farces) first-floor front, lived Jack Ebury and his teeming family. This gigantic establishment, sanctified by the memories of the Rosciuses (the original Roscius played a starring engagement at the R. R. during the Roman occupation of Britain), the Burbages, the Bettertons, the Garricks, the Cookes, the Keans, and the Kembles—and, it must be added, *sub rosa*, of a few wild-beast shows, Bayadère troops, Ethiopian serenaders, and Bedouin contortionists, was now (I speak of "now" as "then") in the occupancy of the renowned Mr. Loggie. Loggie had been most things in his life—even an author; but his unmistakeable vocation was to be a manager, and a manager he had become. If truth must be told, he had himself exhibited the wild-beasts and the contortionists (he was guiltless of the Bayadères) at the R. R.; but he had set his mind on legitimacy at last—"the fine old British comedy, sir;" and his zoological and anatomical byegones were allowed to be byegones. Jack Ebury going over to see Loggie, found that *impressario* not indisposed to treat with him. Of course, Unlucky Jack owed Loggie money (for he had had dealings with him before). He owed everybody money. He was a man who if anybody owed him twenty pounds, would owe that somebody forty before he had himself received the twenty. He was a muddler. But in this case, he most unaccountably refrained from muddling. He made a bargain with Loggie, by which he was to receive a certain sum of money—an enormous one for him—for the five-act comedy whose plot he had ready, and which, shown to Loggie, was by him approved. A portion of this sum was to be paid to him on account; another, and by far the largest portion, he was to receive after the piece had "run" a certain number

of nights. Loggie was a hard man, but a just one; and Ebury knew that if he once made a bargain he would abide by it.

The most unaccountable thing was, that Jack Ebury, going hard and fast, and with a grim resolution to work, actually wrote the comedy from act the first, scene the first, to act the fifth, scene the last, without drawing rein. The next, that being read before the company, it was universally commended (the universe being supposed to consist of the ladies and gentlemen congregated within the four walls of the green-room) as a good play, a sound play, a play full of wit and action, and "telling points." The last, that having been rehearsed, announced in advertisement, poster, and newspaper paragraph, affairs came to this point, that one dusky November evening, in the year of G. C. (which may be taken to mean *Græcas Calendus*, precisely as the reader pleases), there was a snowstorm of playbills about the Royal Roscius Theatre, and on these playbills the detailed title and *dramatis personæ* of a certain new comedy, which, with new scenery, dresses, and decorations, was to be produced for the first time that night. Jack had his chance at *last*, and well he deserved it.

V.

He came home to Crooked Court to dinner that day about five o'clock, tired and harassed, but cheerful and hopeful, having been since ten that morning at the last rehearsal of the piece. All had gone smoothly. Loggie was in first-rate spirits, and, shaking hands warmly with Jack, had predicted a brilliant and lasting success for the piece, and had positively given him a five pound note over and above what he was entitled to draw on account. "And there's two hundred more to come, my pet," said Jack gleefully, dutifully handing Mr. Perraby's beneficent autograph to his wife.

Jack had his dinner, and said he thought half a pint of sherry would do him no harm, as he felt a good deal exhausted. So half a pint of sherry was fetched from the sign of the "Wipperkin Pipperkin," at the top of Crooked Court; and the worthy landlord, Mr. Thumbpiece, who had been in the theatrical

line himself, and had enacted second-class robbers with great success at the most celebrated provincial theatres, told little Jessie, Jack's third, that he "made bold to wish him luck and plenty of it, for he was a real gentleman, every inch of him, as never denied his 'shots,' though he did let them run a long time for sure—" This last portion of his address being more perenthetical and addressed to Mrs. Thumbpiece in the bar-parlour than to Jessie.

Jack Ebury drank his sherry, and drank his wife's health first, and then, laughingly, Loggie's. It is then on record that he cried a little, but not sadly, and being a soft-hearted man, kissed his children all round, who for their parts were so fond of him that they would have accepted kisses as a composition in full for bread and butter any day. Then putting his arm round his wife's waist, he drew her to the window, and they fell to speculating as to the sort of audience there would be over the way, whether the gallery would be noisy or quiet, and whether all the great morning newspaper critics would be there. The good soul, his wife, had laid out carefully Jack's only suit of evening black, and had gone patiently over it button by button, seam by seam, to see that all was in fit and proper order. Those black pantaloons were certainly wofully threadbare; but the gas, Jack said, would cover a multitude of sins.

It was now six o'clock and quite dark. There was a considerable gathering round the pit door already (the gallery entrance was in another street), and the playbill sellers were busily plying their vocation. Even the ham sandwich man, accompanied by the merchant who dealt (and deals) in pigs' trotters, had already arrived, not with any hopes of selling, but to reconnoitre the ground, anticipating a famous draw on the first night of a new season and a new comedy.

"What a noble old structure it is," said Jack, eyeing the great Royal Roscius Theatre admiringly from the window. Were not the FIVE ACTS of his comedy inside that noble structure?

"Yes, dear, it is," Mrs. Ebury said, thinking doubtless of the five acts too; "but is n't it nearly time for you to dress,

Jack?" (She always called him Jack. Everybody called him Jack, save the sheriff of Middlesex, and people of that ilk.)

"A moment, a moment, little wife of mine," cried Jack. "Dear Agnes," he continued, "you don't know how happy I feel, how grateful I feel to you for all the love and goodness and forbearance that for long years you have never withheld from me, no, not for one single moment."

He kissed his wife, and she him, and he went on—

"Do you know, Agnes, that I have a perfect confidence of success to-night; of a glorious success! I have quite a presentiment. Look how many years I have been waiting for a chance. At last I have it."

He had his back to the window, now, holding her round the waist, she resting her head on his shoulder, fondly.

"I must succeed now," he continued, not boastfully, but as a man who has been resigned to a misfortune for years will now and then vindicate his modesty. "I must get on—there is nothing to stop me now."

"Nothing," said his wife gladsomely. "Nothing," she said again, fondly—"Nothing!" she cried out in an awful voice, as if some one had pierced her heart with a dagger, "nothing—but, oh my God—the FIRE!"

Suddenly the room turned red, and the black shadows of husband and wife were cast on to the ceiling. Suddenly, from the windows of the great theatre opposite, there leapt out tongues of flame, as from the mouths of cannon in the port-holes of a ship of war. Then a great black cloud began to overhang the street, and soon myriads of lurid sparks began to dance in it like devils. Then there was a clattering of fast-tearing engines, and far-off echoed shrieks of "fire;" and a crowd of thousands of people starting up, from Heaven knows where, raising their red-hot reflected faces to see the theatre burn. Then the engines began to clank, and the police to fight furiously with the mob, and the mob to yell; and in all the newspapers of the ensuing morning there was, instead of a glowing criticism on Unlucky Jack Ebury's new comedy, a lucid, though homely, report, by Jack Todflint, the penny-a-

liner, of "The total destruction by fire, of the Royal Roscius Theatre, Toppleton Street."

What became of Unlucky Jack Ebury? What does it matter? Did he cast himself from the window, die of a broken heart, or set to work again and write another five-act comedy for another theatre that was not burnt down? What does it matter? What is all this but an idle fancy that came over me many months since, as I wandered among the smouldering ruins of Covent Garden Theatre?

CADDY GRAMPUS'S COLLECTION;

OR, THE

VENGEANCE OF THE CRYPTOCONCHOID SIPHONOSTOMATA.

A TALE OF HORROR!

WHAT he could have been like as a boy—if he ever had been a boy at all—I can't imagine. He was THE nastiest old man! Caddy Grampus! "What's in a name?" the poet asks; but I should like to know what there was in Caddy Grampus's name besides age, ugliness, ill-temper, and a hundred disagreeable things besides. His name looked, and read, and sounded quite as repulsively as did his person. The crabbedest old man.

By the way, he was exceedingly like a crab, both in his body and his movements. A body, round one way, convex the other; long, lazy arms, and legs with which he rather crawled than walked; an irresistible propensity for wriggling about on the sea-shore; and an inconceivable tenacity in grasping what he had laid hold of: so far he was thoroughly cancerous. He was generally addicted, too, to wearing nankeen and gingham clothing, of a pale, parboiled, washed-out buff or pink hue; but there his resemblance to a crab ended. Nobody but the disagreeable old fellow he was, could have had that intolerable old countenance. Besides, he took immoderate quantities of snuff,

a practice to which I have not yet heard that crabs have devoted themselves. Some people said that his face was like a Nuremberg nutcracker, so carved, and notched, and twisted was it into wrinkles and gashes. Others declared stoutly that it resembled nothing so much as a cane-bottomed chair, because the surface of the skin was all holes and knots. He was always prowling about the neighbourhood of the sea, Caddy Grampus; yet the proverb of "the nearer the church," &c., might well have applied to him, for it was as strenuously believed in the port of Liverpool that Caddy Grampus never washed, as that the Manchester people were ill-bred rogues, and Liverpool itself the pink and pride of sea-ports, under the tutelary protection of that long-legged, but most unlikely bird, the Liver.

Caddy Grampus lived in Liverpool sixty years since. No St. George's Hall then, no colossal railway-station, no grand Exchange and Custom-house, no Huskisson's statue or palatial sailors' home. A grimy, hard-working town, thriving more and more every year, and somewhat suspected of not having quite given up a *penchant* for the slave-trade. Caddy Grampus had been a supercargo in the West Indian trade; then a ship-broker in the Goree Piazzas; then a provision-merchant in Dale Street; then an "African Agent" on a large scale. I am certain the old sinner had dealings in ebony flesh and blood, in addition to gold-dust, palm-oil, parrots, and elephants' teeth. He said he had n't —that he never bought or sold a negro in his life. But who was to believe him? He was the WICKEDEST old man.

He had retired from business long since, and was reported to be immensely wealthy. *He* shook his crabby old head and denied, snarlingly, that he was worth a penny; but *I* would n't take his word. He dwelt in a dingy old house in St. Nicholas Lane—a boarded-up-windowed house, with a flight of steps in front, where he would sometimes sit on summer evenings, smoking a pipe of very rank tobacco, and comforting his wicked old waistcoat linings with copious libations of cold rum-and-water, mixed strong. He never offered anybody to partake of his refreshment. He never, if he could help it, passed the time of day to anybody. He never gave away a penny to a beggar

or a bone to a dog; he kicked and cuffed them, did Caddy Grampus. He was THE surliest, nastiest, ugliest, grumpiest old curmudgeon that ever existed—a sort of mixture between the Old Man of the Mountain and John Elwes the miser.

Yet he had his weaknesses, Caddy, though he was as hard as a flint, and avaricious enough to skin it. He was an insatiable collector of Crustacea. He had in the dingy, boarded-up-windowed house quite a notable museum of crabs and lobsters, of astonishing size, and famed, so the tickets appended to them said, in their lifetime for extraordinary voracity. Right up at the top of the house was Caddy Grampus's collection, and in a suite of four rooms, in glass cases, many-shelved, reaching from floor to ceiling, nay in presses cumbering the floor, so that you had scarcely room to turn, were his carefully dried and polished crustaceous preparations. He had specimens of the Podophthalmia, which, as you may not be wholly aware, have perdunculated eyes, and vergiform extremities, partially prehensile and partially ambulatory. He had specimens of the Decapods, such as the Brachyura (Cancer, Portunus, Grapsus), of the Anamoura (Dromia, Ranina, Pagurus, &c.); and of the Macroura (Astacus, Scyllarus, Palœmon, &c). In Stomapods he was not so wealthy, having only a few samples of Mysis, Phyllosoma, Squilla, and the like.

No British collector, however, could equal Caddy Grampus for his Edriophthalmia, his Branchiopoda (of course you know that they have the thoracic extremities lamellar); his Encomostraca, also, were worthy the attention of the curious; and his Araneiformes, Pyconogonic Nymphons, and edentated Lerædiformes, had gained favourable suffrages from the most eminent crustaceous connoisseurs. In fossil specimens, even of the Trilobitic type, he possessed some organic remains in a fine state of preservation; in short, such a collection of shelly creatures, with their innumerable antennæ, their horns and pincers, their carapaces and oviducts, their palpi and vesicular respiratories, their branchiæ and compound eyes, their lenticular bodies and gegarcine haustellations, had never been seen before, and has never been seen since, in the county of Lancaster, or in the

Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Caddy Grampus was visited by the most distinguished members of the scientific world, native and foreign. He corresponded with Professor Kczarskoëwycksky, of the University of Cracow, and as the Professor wrote in Polish, and Caddy in (indifferent) English, and as neither understood the other's language, much benefit to science must have resulted from their interchange of ideas. Doctor Van der Hoogenstracht came all the way from Leyden to inspect Caddy's collection; and the collector declared that the doctor did not come at dusk, wrapped in a horseman's cloak, for nothing, and that he made a desperate attempt to seize and carry away the claw of the Astacus Atrox. But why didn't Caddy cry thieves, or indict the knavish doctor at the sessions? that is what I should like to know. *I* think Caddy *feared publicity*, and that some ugly stories relative to the mode in which he acquired his prize specimen of the Gegarcimus Vorans might have come to light, between sessions and 'sizes.

The disagreeable old fellow was miserly to the extreme in everything else, almost denying his household the necessaries of life; but in purchasing additions to his collection he was speculative, liberal, lavish, almost generous. Mates of vessels trading to foreign parts, masters of fishing-smacks that ventured so far as the North Sea, had standing commissions to bring home any remarkable specimens of shell-fish with which they might meet during their cruises for Candy Grampus's account, and at a fair price. He was always hankering about the vessels in the port, tampering with the sailors as to any strange fish they had seen. Cases and barrels, containing hideously-smelling crustacea, were continually being consigned to him. But one thing was wanting to his happiness. He had never as yet been able to procure a specimen of the CRYPTOCONCHOID SIPHONOSTOMATA, a monstrous crustacean, of the size, so travellers said, of the Lord Mayor's Man of Brass, which was supposed to haunt the South American coasts, and was most frequently to be met with in certain bays and inlets in the Brazils. Vainly, time after time, had Caddy endeavoured to bribe, to induce, captains of merchantmen to bring him home the desiderated shell-fish. They

all said they had sought, but that they could not find. The Cryptoconchoid Siphonostomata was to Caddy Grampus as a red swan, a blue diamond, a black tulip, a four-leaved shamrock, or a roc's egg.

At home in the dingy house, the collector had a Wife, whose principal occupations were to dust the glass cases in the museum, and to cry her eyes out. The first I mean literally, and the act was decidedly against her will. She hated lobsters save in salad, and could not "abide" crabs under any circumstances. The second statement is to be taken metaphorically, and the act was a voluntary one. Nobody could tell why Lucy Morell, who was young and pretty, should have married such an unfavourable specimen of humanity as Caddy Grampus. It could n't have been for love; nobody could ever have loved him. It could scarcely have been for his money, for he grudged her even the necessary funds to keep house with, and made no secret of his intention to leave his collection, and "all the rest of it"—that meant his wealth, of course—to government. You see that there is nothing new under the sun, not even a Sir John Soane or a Mr. Angerstein.

And, besides, which renders the affair still more mysterious, Lucy ought n't to have been married to Caddy Grampus at all: if for no other reason than for this, that she had been engaged for years to Tom Scargill. Tom was a distant connection of Caddy Grampus—a sort of tenth cousin—and was believed to be the only relative the old man had on earth. He, for his part, testified his sense of his consanguinity by cheating Tom out of his inheritance; for he had been left guardian to him, and trustee of a very nice little property bequeathed by the lad's father. But Caddy Grampus made out that the elder Scargill owed him money, and that there were deeds and mortgages, and so forth, and lawyer Fennell was called in, and then they took it to Lancaster before the Chancellor of the Duchy, and even to London town, where some gentlemen in wigs were going to commit young Tom to jail for contempt, though, goodness knows, he was as respectful a young fellow as you would wish to meet, and always touched his cap to the clergyman. The end of it was,

that Caddy Grampus got all, and Thomas Scargill nothing. The young man, almost broken-hearted, almost despairing, went away from Liverpool, too wretched even to bid farewell to his sweetheart. Of course, people said that he had run away, and that Teazum, the beadle, wanted him. Do n't you believe people. At the end of two years, not making his appearance, it began to be noised about that Tom Scargill was dead—a report which Caddy Grampus surlily encouraged, stating even that he had read the account of his death, by drowning, at Jamaica, in the "Public Advertiser." So it was the story of Janet and Auld Robin Gray over again without the romance; and somehow—I can't make out how these unequal matches are made—Lucy Morell became the bride of Old Caddy Grampus.

She had been marrried some twenty months, when, on a bleak afternoon at the end of the year, she sat at one of the three windows of the dingy house that were not boarded up, looking dully and cheerlessly into Nicholas Lane. She thought of her blighted youth—of her dead and scathed love. Her heart reproached young Tom for a moment for never writing to her; but a thousand reasons, she acknowledged, might have prevented him—and in a moment she forgave him. Had she not, too, been false to her troth? She thought of her cross and churlish mate. How he stinted her for money; how he made her slave at dusting the cases of that eternal museum: she had but just now concluded her daily task, and the grim crustacea, with their distended claws and antennæ, and their "compound eyes," terrified her meek spirit. She thought upon his overbearing and vexatious temper, and on how he threatened to "nip" her—the old man-crab—if she did not do his bidding. Oh! he was an ugly customer, Caddy Grampus.

It was growing dark, and Nicholas Lane was almost deserted, when Lucy's attention was attracted to the form of a stranger, who, leaning against one of the houses opposite, was staring with most unaccountable persistency at the very window where she was sitting, and, as it seemed, in at the very pane through which she was looking. He stared so long and so fixedly, that Lucy at last, through sheer feminine curiosity, of course, could not

refrain from opening the window just one little morsel—the glass was *so* dusty and dim—and gazing out on the stranger herself. She did not faint, she did not scream—she had never been a girl given to screaming or fainting; but she drew back suddenly, her hands clasped, her cheek blanched, her lips quivering, her whole frame trembling. The stranger's face was bronzed, his form was burly, his apparel was that of a sailor just come home from a voyage; but Lucy could not forget the eyes, the parted smiling lips, just showing the white teeth. Not dead! not dead! thank heaven! It was young Tom Scargill.

But she, alas!—

History is silent as to how long Lucy kept the window open; whether she approached it again or not, and whether the sunburnt and resuscitated Tom Scargill remained staring at the dingy house from over the way all night. I only hope that Mrs. Grampus was not so imprudent as to run down stairs, open the door, hurry down the steep steps, cross the lane with three bounds, and fling herself sobbing into her old love's arms, entreating her dear, dear, dearest Tom to forgive his unhappy Lucy. Such things would never do in a well-ordered community, you know; besides, Caddy Grampus would have "nipped" his wife fiercely had he known about it. The old "Rooshian!"

This, however, history can be sufficiently eloquent about, and it is certain that all Liverpool talked enough about the matter for days and weeks together, to remove anything like a doubt respecting the authenticity of this relation. Exactly two years and one day from the evening when Lucy was sitting so mournfully at her window, and the sun-burnt sailor was gazing with such intensity thereat, she changed her name of Grampus for the far more euphonious appellation of Scargill. The thing was done with the full approbation of her relatives and friends, with the connivance (for a consideration) of the District Registrar of Marriages, and with the sanction of the ecclesiastical authorities, as represented by the parson and his clerk, within the communion rails of old St. Nicholas Church, Liverpool, assembled. Thomas Scargill, bachelor, was married to Lucy Grampus, WIDOW, and everybody, like the gallant admiral in the ballad of "Billy

Taylor," when they "came for to hear on 't," "very much applauded what she 'd done."

But how came it all about? How did Lucy become haply a widow? How did she get rid of that uncomfortable Caddy? You shall hear. The first astonishing thing was, that Mr. Grampus did n't come home to Nicholas Lane the night of Tom's re-appearance. The second astonishing thing was, that the collector did n't come back to the dingy house for a whole year. The third—and most astonishing—thing was, that he never came back at all!

The last that was ever seen by the Liverpudlians of Caddy Grampus, was on that same wintry afternoon so often alluded to. He was seen to go into the "Weevil and Biscuit," an hostelry much frequented by mariners, and close to George's Dock, in company with John Logg, commonly called "Mahogany Jack," boatswain of the good ship *Lobscouse*, and that same good ship sailed, notwithstanding the wintry weather, that very evening from the Mersey to the Brazils.

Now thirteen months being gone and past, the *Lobscouse*, with a considerable amount of barnacles added to her keel, cast anchor again in the Mersey, and "Mahogany Jack," still boatswain of that good ship, coming on shore in the pinnace, and halting to recruit exhausted nature at the "Weevil and Biscuit," made his way straight to the dingy house in Nicholas Lane, where Lucy dwelt in a state of doubtful widowhood—though with a comforter in the shape of her mother—I hope that seafaring young Thomas, coming home from his Belfast voyages (he was in that trade now), was never invited to tea, and never stayed supper—and that then and there the same "Mahogany Jack," did deliver to the amazed Lucy the following astounding narrative and relation of facts; setting forth, imprimis:

How the facts were all true, and could be vouched for by the captain and crew of the *Lobscouse*, as set down in writing and witnessed before the British consul at Rio, and others his Britannic Majesty's representatives on the Spanish Main.

How Caddy Grampus, meeting with "Mahogany Jack," as before explained, and questioning him as to the existence of any

remarkable specimens of shell-fish in the latitudes he had visited, had been by him informed of the whereabouts of a certain monstrous crustacean called the "hog-in-armour" lobster, which was to be seen alive in the bay of Alapaxameda, forty miles south of Rio de Janeiro, and to the number of innumerable myriads; a lobster which was currently reported among the crew to have size and strength enough to swallow a Lifeguardsman whole, jack-boots, sabre, pigtail and all.

How Caddy Grampus pressed him, both by offers of pecuniary reward and by passionate entreaties, extending even to tears, to undertake the capture of one of these monstrous lobsters, saying that it was a cryptosomething or other, with a very long tail, which he, "Mahogany Jack," could not remember, and for which he said he would give all he was worth, even to his collection. How Jack unwillingly declined all these offers, knowing, from the notorious ferocity of the fish, the utter impossibility of the task, and not wishing to pledge himself to its performance under false pretences. How in a fit of enthusiasm, increased perhaps by his continuous replenishment of his bumper of cold rum-and-water, Caddy Grampus declared that if the "hog-in-armour"—but he called it by its long name—could not be brought to him, he would go himself to the "hog-in-armour," and braving an eight or nine months' voyage out and in, would take passage in the *Lobscouse*. How he at first expressed a desire to return home, settle his affairs, make his will, and, as he expressed it, "just give that wife of his a good 'nip,'" but being told that the *Lobscouse* was even then preparing to work out of dock, he caused himself to be conveyed on board, in an extraordinary state of enthusiasm, rum, and a wherry, made terms at once with the captain, and started that very night.

Well!

Well, according to "Mahogany Jack's" solemn asseveration, he was conveyed to his destination, and at his special request was rowed in one of the ship's boats to a jutting groin of rock in the bay of Alapaxameda.

Well!

It is too horrible, too dreadful, but confound him! he was THE wickedest old man, and the truth shall out.

Caddy Grampus fell a victim to the strength and ferocity of the Cryptoconchoid Siphonostomata, which resorted in shoals to the bay of Alapaxameda. The horrified mariners watched him from the boat, pottering with his creels and spears on the rock. They saw him make a false step, disappear with a shriek in the white surge, then re-appear, battling with legions of those gigantic crustacea. They saw the last struggle, the ensanguined wave — as "Mahogany Jack" said, with terrible brevity—

"THE OGGS-IN-HARMOUR HATE 'IM HUP."

Caddy Grampus died intestate, and the depositions of the crew of the *Lobscouse* being admitted as proof of his death, his widow administered to his estate. She sold the collection for a round sum, though much below its scientific value, to Mynheer Cornelius Van Swammerdam, agent to the museum of Spitzbergen. The widow and Thomas lived long afterwards, and very happily, on the proceeds: although there were not wanting censorious and envious people, who declared that the story of Caddy Grampus's voyage to Brazil, and his conflict with the Cryptoconchoid Siphonostomata was all fudge; that he was in reality spirited away by a press-gang, that he afterwards deserted his ship at Barbadoes, took to evil marine courses, as he had formerly done to bad land ones, and was hanged for piracy, at Execution Dock, in 1803. Be it as it may, he was THE worst old man, and any fate served him perfectly right.

A PURSE OR A COFFIN.

THE TRUE STORY OF LADY DURBAR.

I TELL the following story almost exactly "as it was told to me." I have amplified little and exaggerated nothing. The names, for obvious reasons, have been changed. The facts —*they are facts*—on which the tale is founded strike me as very much resembling what the late S. T. Coleridge was wont to call "pyschological curiosities." The whole is but an illustration of the astonishing contradictions daily and hourly to be met with in that more astonishing combination of good and evil—of nobility and meanness—of sincerity and hypocrisy—of generosity and avarice—the human character. With frightful force will be found here exemplified the truth of the Divine aphorism—"The heart of man is deceitful above all things, *and desperately wicked.*"

I.

A GOOD WOMAN.

"Charity covereth a multitude of sins." In the case of Lady Durbar, however, charity's task must have been almost a sinecure, so few sins had her Ladyship, to all appearances, to cover. Very rare are the ladies or gentlemen of whom *all* speak well, at whom *none* point the finger of censure, or about whose ears the breath of scandal buzzes not; but you might have walked through every street, square, crescent, and terrace of the censorious and scandal-loving town of B——, and over ten miles of its environs withal, any three hundred and sixty odd days out of the year, and still heard nothing but praise, loud, enthusiastic, and heartfelt, of the Lady Durbar.

The poor literally adored her. With the ample means with which she had been blessed by Providence she soothed many an aching heart, and made many a desolate home cheerful. Disdaining to confine herself to the conventionalisms of fine-lady charity in the country—to a parsimonious dole of blankets and unlimited supply of cheap tracts—the beneficent lady was unceasing in her solicitude for the comforts of the less fortunate of her fellow-creatures. There is a vast amount of physical misery in B——, Belgravian as it is in its watering-place gentility; and many a den of squalor and filth, of want and hunger, of profligacy and intemperance, did the lady visit in the course of her Samaritan wanderings, and light up with the glow of her tenderness and mercy. Hovels and shebeens, where the protestant curate would have shuddered to set foot, where even the catholic priest might have hesitated to tread, appalled not the Lady Durbar; no tale of misery ever encountered an inattentive or an unmoved auditor in her; no appeal was ever made in vain to her purse-strings or her influence.

She was, of course, often imposed upon. Divers horrible cutaneous afflictions were got up artistically with orpiment and rose-pink for her especial deception; the consumptive (such is the hypocrisy of mankind!) would cough twice as loudly and twice as hoarsely when her well-known form was shadowed on the threshold; little children would look hungrier, squalid grandams would gather their rags around them with an aspect of bleaker chillness; artisans out of work would look more depressed, and always hard-worked women appear more jaded and careworn, when Lady Durbar entered their dwellings.

Innumerable were the remorseless landlords, whose cruel hands she had arrested in the very act of depriving her *protégés* of their furniture. She had paid out innumerable brokers. Countless were the pawned articles of furniture or raiment she had redeemed, even though the articles in question—as not unfrequently happened—were her own gifts. Multifarious were the orphan boys she had apprenticed, the orphan brides she had portioned. Donations of blankets, Bibles, coals, bacon, mattresses, Welsh flannel, elderberry wine, and sarsaparilla, flowed

from her in an inexhaustible stream. The Lady Durbar was a thoroughly charitable woman.

Few charitable institutions were there in the three kingdoms, or, indeed, out of them, to which she was not a liberal subscriber and benefactor. Widows, orphans, soldiers, sailors, miners, the blind, the lame, the halt, the paralytic, and the phthisical, all came within the sphere of her beneficence. Nor were foreigners and aliens—Turks, Jews, or Heretics—excluded from her bounty. Her name headed the subscription lists of scores of missionary societies, and many a Cruel Islander owed his ribbed flannel waistcoat, many a Katchakarvodlum Indian his warmingpan, hundred-bladed penknife, and edifying hymn-book, to the charity of Lady Durbar.

Nor did she give alms as the Pharisee. She emphatically "did good by stealth, and blushed to find it fame." Yet did she know the value of the "bellwether" in every charitable troupeau, and therefore did she not object occasionally to the publication of her name in a subscription list, the liberality and frequency of her contributions acting as incentives to her less actively charitable acquaintance. But to a far greater extent did she prefer the pleasure of being an anonymous caster into the chest. Two humble initials, a simple anagram, a simpler motto, often sufficed to veil the donor of a really princely gift to some hospital, school, or charity. Newspapers at Christmas time abounded with short but pithy paragraphs setting forth the receipt at such-and-such a police-court, of five and ten guinea subscriptions towards the funds of the poor-box, sent by "D." and sometimes "Lady——." She subscribed for the burnt-out tradesman, the reduced clergyman, the shipwrecked master mariner's orphan daughters. The lists for the benefit of the widow of a "late officer of rank in H.M. service" abounded with contributions from "Anonymous," "A Sympathiser," or "A Friend." It was Lady Durbar who was anonymous, the sympathiser, and the friend.

It may readily be imagined that she was beloved to enthusiasm by all those who knew her. The very mention of her honoured name was sufficient to raise a storm of applause

at a May meeting at Exeter Hall, or at a benevolent soirée at the Hanover Square Rooms. Anxious friends thronged her door and inundated her hall-porter with cards of condolence were she visited with ever so slight an ailment; and it was even rumoured that so struck with her many virtues was Mr. Pix, the worthy vicar of B——, that he proclaimed his intention, some Sunday or other, of preaching in full congregation a sermon on the merits of Lady Durbar. He never did so, however, being doubtless too much occupied in his feud and controversy with Mr. Patten, the Incumbent of the opposition proprietary chapel, as to the exact prospects in a future state of still-born children.

I have been so eager to tell you how much good Lady Durbar effected, that I have omitted to mention the source of the wealth of which she made so admirable a use. Nor, indeed, have I been at all communicative respecting her personal appearance, manners, conversation, &c. I must hasten to atone for these shortcomings.

The Lady Durbar was the only daughter of a rich East India banker and agent, who had amassed an immense fortune in those halycon Indian days when the pagoda-tree was still to be shaken, and nabobs and their jagheris were not yet myths. Being a rich man—a very rich man—he could not, of course, do anything in a mean or insignificant way. Thus, when he failed in the great crash of 1825, it was for no paltry one or two score thousand pounds, but for a good million and a half sterling. There was a tremendous sensation in the City and on 'Change when it became known that the great agency firm of Mango, Chutnee, Cholopp, Chowringee-Chobahawder and Co. were "gone." There was quite a crowd in Old Broad Street, gazing at the closed doors and barred shutters of the bankrupt house. Our heroine's papa, Sir John Mango, at once proceeded to India to make efforts to "wind up" the affairs of the Calcutta house. Arrived there, no doubt can exist that he betook himself with much assiduity to the task of winding up. In fact, he wound himself away altogether; and, beyond a report that he had married a Begum, and had a very large zenana in

the dominions of some native prince, he was never seen or heard of more.

Fanny Mango, then eighteen years of age, beautiful and accomplished, saw before her three very disagreeable alternatives—to go out as a governess, to take up her residence with two deaf and remarkably cantankerous aunts at Brixton, or to marry. Not that marriage is, to the majority of young ladies, such a very disagreeable alternative; but the only suitor whom the daughter of the fugitive bankrupt could at that time command was one Sir Hugh Durbar, a general in the Company's service—rich, bilious, ill-tempered, and fifty-seven years of age. There was certainly, *par dessus le marché*, a cousin of Fanny's, Fred. Elton by name, who was young, sound-livered, good-tempered, and clever; but he was as poor as it was possible for a solicitor's clerk to be with eighty pounds a year, and a bedridden mother to keep. Marriage with him was of course quite out of the question. Sir Hugh was in the direction, and a shareholder, besides, in no end of banks and indigo-houses. He had a house in Park Lane, and a villa at Twickenham; and, to make a long story short, some twelve months after the flight of her father, Fanny Mango became Lady Durbar.

Speedily she had bitter cause to regret the ill-assorted union. Her husband led her, for the twelve years that his ill-favoured career was prolonged, what is commonly termed the life of a dog. Constant ill-humour, chronic and querulous ill-health, brutal language, and not by any means rarely brutal violence, were the most salient characteristics of Sir Hugh Durbar. The lady bore it all like an angel. Her meekness and her patience under suffering were the theme of universal surprise and admiration. She swathed his gouty feet, she administered his colchicum, she bore his blows and curses with inexhaustible resignation and sweetness of temper. Suddenly Sir Hugh took it into his head that he would travel on the Continent, and travel, too, alone. His wife, however, always tenderly solicitous, insisted on accompanying him as far as B——, in which charming bathing-place, and on the East Cliff, he had a mansion. There she remained awaiting his return—a return, however,

that never came; for Sir Hugh Durbar died at Civita Vecchia of gout in the stomach, just six months after his departure from B——, leaving his ill-used wife, it must be admitted considerably to his credit, the whole of his large fortune, without stipulation or reserve.

The news of her husband's death profoundly affected Lady Durbar. She was for a lengthened period perfectly inconsolable, and openly avowed her determination to wear mourning for the deceased as long as she lived. Thenceforth she gave up the pomps and vanities of the world. She saw no gay company, she went to no balls or parties, but devoted herself wholly and entirely to the practice of charity and good works.

Let me give you a sketch of her abode and of herself. She lived in a red-brick mansion, sober and substantial, but decidedly sombre. The drawing-room was large and old-fashioned, and covered with a Turkey carpet; heavy curtains shrouded the windows; the furniture was decorated with a kind of dull, subdued splendour. In the centre of the apartment was a mahogany table, heaped with religious books and tracts, with half-made-up flannels, packets of tea and sugar, work-boxes, writing materials, files and letter-clips, visiting cards, printed circulars, worsted work, &c. Imagine sitting at this table a lady of commanding stature, and who must once have possessed beauty as commanding. There is an indescribable tinge of meekness and melancholy, of resignation and long-suffering, lingering in her large, wistful gray eyes, and in the lines of her mouth. She is attired in black velvet, and wears a widow's cap, though her husband Sir Hugh has been dead these twenty years. Her hair is rich and glossy, and not yet gray. This is the Lady Durbar.

She rises at six, winter and summer, and at eight reads prayers in the dining-room to the servants. From breakfast till lunch-time she writes or reads good books, or, like Dorcas, makes clothes for the poor. From lunch-time till three in the afternoon she gives audience to ambassadors on charitable missions. From three to five she rides in her grave and soberly-decorated carriage from one abode of misery to

another, carrying relief and solace with her wherever she goes. Then home, to a plain substantial dinner; then, perchance, a quiet, decorous cup of tea or game at chess with the clergyman, or the solicitor, or her physician. Then evening prayers again, and after half-past ten not a light will you see in any window of Lady Durbar's mansion. So passed the current of her life. So passed in the odour of piety and charity the twenty years following the demise of her husband.

But, *ay di me!* what says the Trappist? "Brother, we must die!" The Lady Durbar fell sick.

II.

DEATH'S HAND.

There is about a house when Death is on the threshold or in the chamber an indefinable something, a feeling, a prescience, an oppression to be felt nowhere else and never to be forgotten when once felt. The atmosphere seems denser and closer—almost stifling at times—there is an indistinct humming, a drowsy purring, a buzzing around you.

Death is in the house! We speak softly and tread lightly on the stairs, holding our breath as we pass the chamber in which IT lies in state. Talk of the death watch! What can equal in solemn and mysterious horror the sound of the undertaker's knock? Ugh! a sultry summer's evening, when the messengers of the grave come gliding up the stairs with list shoes, their grim burden—to be made more awful presently—between them. Did *you* ever hear an undertaker's knock about nine in the evening, reader? If you ever have, you will never forget that monotonous verberation.

Death was on the threshold of the Lady Durbar's mansion. The road before the house was strewn with tan. The knocker was muffled, the bell-pull untwisted. Tradesmen and servants glided stealthily up and down the area-steps; visitors held cautious conference with the hall-porter through the half-closed doorway.

It was Christmas Day—a bitter Christmas, too. The snow

had fallen heavily during the day, and powdering the dark tan before the door, made it look like a twelfthcake of evil omen. As night closed in, rain began to fall mingled with the snow, and a sharp east wind blew.

It was six o'clock in the evening. Two carriages were standing before the door—Doctor Phillby, the physician's, the Rev. Mr. Pix, the rector's. Let me, with the storyteller's privilege, enter the mansion and walk up stairs.

In the drawing-room five persons were assembled. Standing before the fire, his coat-tail spread to the genial blaze, was Mr. Squill, her ladyship's own apothecary (Dr. Phillby had been specially called in, and was now up stairs with the sick lady). Near the apothecary, in an arm-chair, his hands demurely crossed, was Mr. Pix. At the table, moodily sipping some wine, which had followed a hasty repast, were two young men—one, from his raven suit and white neckcloth, apparently a clergyman; the other bluff, hale, thickset, as a country squire should be. A third young man, in the undress uniform of a cavalry regiment —indeed he had but just ridden over from the barracks in the Lewes Road—was pacing hurriedly up and down the room, his jingling spurs and accoutrements jarring strangely on the general stillness. These three young men were the nephews of Lady Durbar.

The stern and solemn quietude of these five persons had in it something lugubrious and significant. Strong men as they were, they seemed not to dare to speak, or endeavour to pass the time in the ordinary unmeaning conventionalities of conversation. To every man's mind there was present the image of a certain front bedchamber on the second floor; in every man's mind there reigned supreme the thought that in that bedchamber the sands of life were fast ebbing away; that a form now writhing in and sentient of pain would soon be stiff; that eyes now lambent with the last flickering of the torch of life would soon be quenched; that for the being faintly murmuring and gasping above stairs the washers and upholsterers of mortality would soon be needed; that, in a word, Death was in the house.

Suddenly the door opened, and Dr. Phillby appeared.

"A bad case, I am afraid, gentlemen," he said. "A bad case. There is, I am afraid, no hope for our patient."

"No hope!" exclaimed the young officer, the youngest of the three brothers.

"No hope!" echoed the country squire-looking nephew.

"No hope!" mused the young clergyman. He added, *sotto voce*, "And she has made no will!"

This was the key to the perturbed anxiety of the three nephews. Lady Durbar had fallen suddenly ill, and not the slightest clue existed with regard to her testamentary intentions. The three nephews had all been treated by her with equal kindness and affection. A good living had been secured for the clergyman; a capital freehold farm for the countryman; the young officer's commission had been purchased, and his not inconsiderable debts had been paid for him at least three several times. But no distinctive favourite had been made, and the three nephews were consequently in the dark as to which of them would inherit the large property of which they knew (notwithstanding her boundless generosity) their aunt would die possessed. Mr. Pix, moreover, may have had some little misgivings as to whether the Cruel Islanders, or the Katchaharvodlum Indians had been remembered by their former benefactress. The physician and apothecary thought it improbable that mementos in the shape of mourning rings or silver teapots might be left them. Altogether, nephews, parson, doctor, apothecary—though, of course, all devotedly attached to Lady Durbar, and *desolés* at the thought of her approaching dissolution—would have been all the easier in their minds had they known for certain whether Mr. Tapes, her ladyship's legal adviser, was the custodian of a certain document paying probate duty, and called a last will and testament.

"Her Ladyship," suggested Mr. Pix, softly, following up the conversation I have by a digression so unceremoniously interrupted, "may have executed a will, and——"

"She may not," observed Mr. Squills.

"She might *now*, even," mildly suggested the young clergyman.

Dr. Phillby shook his head.

"She might at least hold a pen, or have it held for her," the officer remarked, bluntly.

"As easily, my young friend," answered the physician, blandly, "as she could hold that sabre of yours in the steel scabbard, which, permit me to add, makes somewhat more noise, conjointly with your spurs, than is exactly suited to the vicinity of a sick chamber."

"I tell you what it is," broke in the countryman nephew, draining off a mighty bumper of port wine, and bringing his brawny fist heavily to bear on the table; "I tell you what it is, Aunt Fanny's far too sensible a woman not to have made a will. But why don't you, instead of bothering your heads as to whether she has not, settle among yourselves who is to pluck up courage to step up stairs and ask her? *I* will, if nobody else volunteers."

The physician shook his head again. "Speechless, my dear sir."

"But she can nod yes or no."

"Perfectly insensible to external influences."

"Hush! hush! pray hush, my young friends!" broke in Mr. Pix. "Surely this discussion over the not yet inanimate form of your poor revered relation, is, to say the least, indecent."

"Humph!" muttered the countryman.

"Ah!" sighed the parson.

The dragoon said nothing. He had taken off his sabre and laid it across a chair when reproved by Dr. Phillby. He now sat down beside it and played with the sword-knot.

Suddenly there came a sound of hurried footsteps overhead. The physician and apothecary, mutely enjoining silence, quitted the apartment. Then, after the interval of a few minutes, more footsteps were heard descending the stairs, the door opened, and the Lady Durbar's maid hastily entered the drawing-room.

She was a rubicund, merry-looking little body, this lady's-

maid, at most times; far too merry-looking for the severe and staid Durbar household, but her face was now ashy white.

"Oh, if you please, sir!" she exclaimed, addressing herself to Mr. Pix; "my lady is much worse. You must come up stairs, if you want to see the last of her."

Silent and appalled the four men obeyed the summons, and followed the lady's-maid up stairs.

. . . . . .

"See how a Christian can die," said Addison to the young Earl of Warwick. Reader, listen to the story of the end of Lady Durbar.

Nine o'clock had struck. The sleet and hail scourged the window-frames of the bedchamber; the night wind blew in wild and fitful gusts. The room was large and handsomely furnished, thickly carpeted, and was pervaded by the odour of some strong and subtle Indian perfume which Lady Durbar was strangely attached to, and which, in despite of the remonstrances of her medical attendants, she persisted in using. It seemed an odd whim, an eccentricity on her part; for no one could tell where she placed the perfume, or why she never used it in any other apartment of the house.

There was a large fourpost bedstead in the centre of the room, with heavy, funeral-like hangings. In this bed lay the moribund.

She was quite speechless, and to all appearance insensible.

The three nephews stood at the foot of the bed, the clergyman with them. On one side of the dying woman were the doctors; on the other the lady's-maid. No one spoke a word. Gloom, awe, terrible suspense, were supreme.

Everywhere, save in the FIRE, which, bright and sparkling as seacoal and a billet of wood could make it, crackled and leaped joyously, sending its bright tongues of flame and fiery smoke far up the ample chimney. A cheerful fire! A jovial fire! A roaring fire!

Just then the clock struck ten, and a wilder gust of wind shook the window-frames. Even above that the moan of the troubled sea was audible. *Just then, curiously, one of those red-hot cinders we call, from the ringing sound they make when cold,*

"PURSES," *and sometimes, from their odd long shape,* "COFFINS," *flew out from the cheerful fire and fell on the hearthrug, where it lay for a moment scorching the woollen fabric beneath.*

For a moment only. The glowing cinder had scarcely fallen when the dying woman sprang from the bed. Speechless and apparently insensible, she yet walked erect and firm. Taking the tongs from their nook, she advanced to where the cinder lay smoking and crackling, clutched it with the instrument, flung it back into the fire, then fell forward on the hearth—DEAD!

Dead.

And is that all the story?

Not all. The first emotions of terror and grief over, the body raised, the melancholy offices for the dead seen to, the gentlemen returned to the discussion of the question of the will.

There was none, to all appearance, extant. Mr. Tapes, when questioned, denied all knowledge of the existence of such a document. If the Lady Durbar *had* made a will, she must with her own hands have hid it somewhere.

The three nephews, the clergyman, the doctors, and the lawyer, were again assembled in the chamber of death. The body was in the coffin, and they had come to gaze upon it for the last time.

"There *must* be a will," muttered the dragoon nephew.

"What's this?" exclaimed the countryman, looking at a little black round hole in the hearthrug, immediately in a line with the head of the coffin, standing on its tressels.

It was where that *other* coffin—for it *was* a coffin, and no purse—had fallen from the fire.

"I'm not a believer in omens," said the physician, looking round; "but I really should not be surprised if we found a will beneath this spot."

"Take up the hearthrug!" cried the dragoon.

"We'll have the carpet up!" exclaimed the countryman.

The hearthrug and the carpet were taken up: the "coffin" cinder had burnt through both.

"I do really believe," here interposed the lady's-maid, who had stolen on tiptoe into the room, "that my lady kept a strong box or something of the sort just there, for there's a bulging like in the drawing-room ceiling, and has been for years, just underneath that spot."

When the boards were laid bare, a considerable discoloration of the floor was visible—a brown discoloration, extending two or three feet from the common centre made by the black round hole burned by the cinder.

"We'll have the flooring up!" cried the three nephews.

A carpenter was sent for and commenced his task.

"Phew!" he exclaimed, stopping short. "How strong that Indian scent my lady was so fond of smells!"

Then he went——

. . . . . .

A sudden cry of horror, of dreadful terror and amazement!

God knows by what half-distinguished scrap of clothing, what half-effaced lineament, what half-remembered trinket, it was recognised and known! But there it was. *From beneath where the cinder had fallen was dragged out the rotting body of Sir Hugh Durbar!*

Had he ever been to Civita Vecchia, or, returning, had he met his end here, murdered in his own bedchamber, buried before his own hearth? And by whom? Who knows? Who shall know till all things are discovered and the end comes?

THE PERFIDY OF CAPTAIN SLYBOOTS.

CAPTAIN SLYBOOTS, quotha! Macheath was a captain, and so was Kidd the pirate. Jerry Abershaw (so deservedly hanged for stealing a bowl of mock-turtle soup) was also, as I am informed, given to the assumption of the title of captain. I'd captain them! I am not a revengeful man. I love my neighbour as myself, and can forgive the cabman who overcharges me—after I have had him up before the magistrate, of course, and have seen him well punished for his soul's health. But I confess that I should like to see Captain Slyboots boiled; that I should like to see him grilled; that I should like to run red-hot forks—three pronged—into those confounded blue eyes of his, and to introduce the sharp-pointed blades of penknives between his flesh and his finger-nails. He has destroyed my happiness. He has made a Sahara desert of Arabella Lodge, and reared a hideous Upas tree in the middle of the Brussels carpet in the back drawing-room. Yes; the back drawing-room, for there—but be calm, my raging soul; let me relate the story of my wrongs for the benefit of husbands in general, and gunpowder agents in particular. Let me gibbet this monster, and nail him like a vampire bat of a light dragoon as he is against the door of the temple of Hymen. Give me a pen of adamant and a pint bottle of gall, and I will commit to paper the particulars of the atrocious—the fiendish, perfidy of Captain Slyboots.

I spoke of gunpowder agents. I'm one of them. I have an office in Broad Street Buildings, in the city of London, where I carry on the chief agency of the Bangford Powder Mills. You need not be afraid to come and see me. We don't keep much

on the premises, and I never smoke before lunch. Good years, bad years, my commission, salary and perquisites, bring me in eight hundred a-year. I keep a dog-cart; my wife has a brougham, whenever she chooses to ask her "hubby"—or rather the wretched outcast who was once known to her by that endearing diminutive—for it; I live at Arabella Lodge, Brompton, and my name is Harcourt Symes. I have done with the vanities of the world now; so I don't mind telling you that I was christened Thomas, and that my papa used to spell *his* surname thus—Sims.

My Arabella—I don't mean my house, but my wife—was the beauty of Herne Bay; and I married her there in 'fifty-three, I married her for her loving heart, her varied accomplishments, and her long black ringlets. She had a little property, which I valued little indeed in comparison with her own sweet self, and which I have invested very advantageously in the Bank of Deposit in Pall Mall East. We have two children now—poor helpless innocents!—Grenville Harcourt, aged three, I intend shall become a civil engineer; Arabella-Lousia, aged two, is destined for the church. The dear little creature is so staid and solemn, that my wife declares that when she grows up some bishop will be sure to fall in love with her and marry her.

Up to the month of November last year, Arabella Lodge was a model, on a small scale, of the garden of Eden. I don't think any children in Brompton ever cried so seldom as did ours. My Arabella was a capital manager, and the housekeeping bills were very moderate. Our cook was a treasure, and our two housemaids pearls; and as for James the footboy, I never knew such a clever boy as that boy. In gardening, grooming, knife-cleaning, errand-running, door-answering, and bringing home books from the circulating library, he was an Admirable Crichton. He had but one failing—a leaning towards singing nigger melodies, accompanied on the bones, in the back garden late at night; but a timely admonition, and a mild application of the back of a clothes-brush to the head, cured him of that ungenteel propensity. I don't think, six months ago, there was a happier man in Brompton—in London—in England—than Harcourt

Symes. Slippers always ready when I came home; children always shiny-faced and well-dressed, with pink bows on their plump little shoulders as big as kites; cat—I hate cats—always snugly locked up in the coal-cellar; my Arabella smiling; my dog Buffo turning over head and heels with delight in the gravel-path; the leaves of the new books all cut, the dinner ready, and the wine decanted. I entrusted her with everything, even with my Carbonnel's port. We were visited by, we received, the best families in the neighbourhood and outlying suburbs: the Almond Tumblers, of Thurlow Square (rich conveyancing family), the Pouter Pigeons of the Gloucester Road, the Cotchins of Brompton Square, the Chiners of Chiswick Mall. We had people from Kensington Palace—from the Royal Palace at Kensington—yes, sir—beneath our humble roof. Old Lady Fang, widow of George the Third's dentist and cupper, and enjoying the hospitality of a grateful country in that dignified retreat, took up my Arabella. She invited the very best society to our house. The honourable Miss Julia Medea Buffleton (*she* lives at Hampton Court Palace, yes, sir, and is first cousin to *the* Lord Buffleton) used to come and read her three volume novels of fashionable life to my wife, before she sent them to the crack west-end publishers, who were only prevented from giving them to the world *by an infamous combination of literary cliques*. Young Guffoon told me as much; and young Guffoon ought to know. I never mentioned the gunpowder business at Brompton, of course; that might have led to a "blow up" you know (isn't that a joke?); we gave snug little dinner parties, and quiet little dancing teas, and now and then a regular first-rate concert and soirée. I am not a vain man, but I think I can boast of having seen the prettiest girls and the most genteel-looking parties—I mean men—in our suit of rooms at Arabella Lodge, that are visible anywhere out of Almacks or her Majesty's drawing room.

In an evil hour—what do I say!—a fatal, an irrevocable hour, the path of our turtle-dove felicity was crossed by Captain Slyboots. My wife picked him up,—yes, "picked him up" is the word—at the annual ball in aid of the funds for provid-

ing small-tooth combs for the destitute Shetland ponies, held at the Hanover Square Rooms. I had an engagement at Greenwich that day. I think the landlord of the Trafalgar wanted some gunpowder; at all events, I went down, and half-a-dozen jolly fellows from the city, who, curiously, all had business in Greenwich that day, went with me. We dined together when business was over, and felt so exhausted with the mental anxiety we had gone through—you know how harassing business matters are—that we could not possibly get back to town till the last train. Lady Fang had kindly promised to be my wife's chaperon at the ball (which was a very exclusive one, vouchers, signed by two ladies patronesses, being requisite to procure a ticket, quite tip-top style) so I felt quite easy on my Arabella's account. When I returned home rather late that night—for feeling hungry after the railroad journey, I had dropped in to have some supper at my club—I found a white camelia in a glass of water on my wife's dressing-table. Her own bouquet, which I had sent her that morning from Covent Garden, lay beside it all crumpled and faded. I never was of a jealous disposition—never! never! ha ha! hoo! never—and I thought no more about it. I know now who gave her that camelia.

The next morning Arabella told me all about Captain Slyboots. He was the most delightful creature, she said—so droll, so full of anecdote, so *truly distinguished*. He had been presented to her by Lady Fang herself, and was, indeed, a distant connection of her Ladyship. He, Slyboots, was the only son of Sir Crispin Slyboots, of Diddlecot Hall, Learyshire, immensely rich, captain in the 21st Hussars, and all the rest of it. It was by the merest chance that he happened to be in town so late in the year, but was in London, she believed, in order to settle something with the family lawyers, about the estates in Learyshire. He had asked permission to call; permission had been granted, and he was to make a call that very day—a morning call. I am the most unsuspicious man breathing, and had my wife told me then—mark me, *then*—that the Sultan of Turkey, or Govenor Brigham Young, or any other polygamical villain,

was to call at Arabella Lodge, I should have driven into the city with a light heart. It was not long before I saw Captain Slyboots. I had to ask him to dinner before the week was over. He came very often, not too often for me *then*, for he had such insinuating, such persuasive ways about him, that I really liked the fellow. He found out all about the gunpowder, and rallied me—"chaffed," he called it—in a manner at which it was impossible to be offended, but for which I should like to kick him, now. He did me the honour—I mean he had the impudence—to call on me in my office in the city one morning, and borrowed ten pounds of me in the most affable—I mean in the most jesuitical, manner. I must do him the justice to say that he paid me the money back: I wish he hadn't, that I might sue him, and accumulate costs against him, and immerse him in a life-long dungeon. Saha! He was over six feet high, and had fair whiskers, which he curled; and fair hair, which he parted down the middle; and fair moustaches, which he twisted; and very white teeth, and a white hooked nose, like an eagle's beak. His eyes, as I have said, were blue. You see that to all appearance he was as like as two peas to the heavy swells one sees flattening their noses against the windows of the army and navy clubhouses, or smoking big Milo cigars outside four-in-hands; but Captain Slyboots was of a very different order. He wasn't solemn and sheepish and foolish, like the grandly-dressed young fellows one meets out. The wretch could sing and dance, and imitate the noises of animals, and play the banjo, and do tricks with the cards. He could mesmerise, and make pigs out of oranges. He was a dab at table-turning; could make a hat spin like a teetotum; knew lots of poetry and all that; talked about chemistry and Mr. Faraday; taught my wife *potichomanie* and modelling in wax; was the best archer—I had a target in my back garden—I ever knew, and played the pianoforte brilliantly. Oh, he *was* sly, he was! If I hadn't known him to be the son of a baronet, and heir to eight thousand a-year, I should have taken him to be a play-actor. All the girls who visited us were mad after him. Clara Cotchins (who has a good bit of money of her own, though her

father is only Cotchins, R.A., the farm-yard painter) positively threw herself at him, like a boomerang; but she came back again, also like a boomerang, and because Captain Slyboots wouldn't make love to her, she said he was a puppy. A puppy! you might as well call a Bengal tiger a kitten. Mrs. Almond Tumbler conceived a violent hatred to my wife, because the Captain visited oftener at Arabella Lodge than in Thurlow Square, and took an early occasion to inform Captain Slyboots in strict confidence that we were only "people in the city,"—"something quite low," she believed. I should like to know what the Tumblers are, forsooth, if not people in Bedford Row, who make their living by grinding the noses of their unfortunate clients. I always hated lawyers. The Captain laughed, told my wife the story, and drew a pen-and-ink caricature of Mrs. Almond Tumbler—who had three distinct double chins, one under the other, like a flight of stairs going the wrong way—which sent us all into ecstacies of laughter.

You know what a rage there was last winter for private theatricals. From Woburn Abbey to Camberwell Grove, the mania for amateur play-acting spread like an epidemic. Brompton didn't escape the infection; Kensington took it severely. The Pouter Pigeons gave a grand performance on New Year's Eve in the Gloucester Road, and a ball afterwards. A dramatised version of the "Old Curiosity Shop" was the piece of the evening, and Clara Pigeon, who is at least five feet eight inches high (she is called "Grenadier" in the domestic circle), insisted upon playing "Little Nell." To diminish from the effect of her stature, she wore a ridiculously short skirt, which made her look like an over-grown ballet-girl. To mend matters, Master Tom Pigeon, who is about six inches taller than his sister, must needs play "Quilp," and in order to give himself the appearance of a dwarf, he bent his legs and hunched his body to such an extent that in the middle of the piece he was seized with the cramps, and was carried off the stage. He wasn't seen again, but lay on the sofa behind the scenes, moaning dismally, while Miss Pitcher, the teacher from Minerva House, played airs from the "Trovatore" on the piano.

Of course, we must have our share in private theatricals, and early in the present year my wife propounded to me a notable plan for an amateur performance on the night of the 14th of February—Valentine's Day, as you know. I gave way to her, as I did in everything, *then*, and gave her a cheque into the bargain. The programme was most elaborate. First, we were to have a grand operatic selection by lady and gentlemen executants; accompanyist, the famous Signor Papadaggi, who was my wife's singing-master, and whom I would gladly have paid for his services (Arabella has—she *had*, rather—a delicious contralto voice), but who insisted upon giving his gratuitous aid out of regard for Captain Slyboots, who was "ticklar frez of 'is," he said. After the opera was to come a solo on the bassoon by Jack Blunderbore, who is a friend of mine in the city (Blunderbore and Doublebarrel, gun-stock makers, Barbican), and whom I instructed, after his performance on the bassoon was over, to sit in a corner and say not one word till supper time, when I would make it up to him in game pie and champagne. Jack, who is one of the best-natured fellows alive, promised at once. To follow the bassoon, Clara Pigeon, the "Grenadier," who is awfully "blue," wanted to recite about half a dozen pages from Carlyle's "Latter-day Pamphlets," but I put a stop to *that*. "No infidel doctrines in my house, Mrs. S.," said I; "one might as well have Tom Paine and the 'Rights of Man,' at once." The performances were to end with an entirely new and *original* farce, written by Ethelred Guffoon, Esq., entitled "The Kiss and the Kick; or, A Hint to Husbands."

Guffoon, a good-natured young fellow enough, who wore peg-top trousers and a chin tuft, was a clerk in the Nose-bag and Check-string section of the Hackney Carriage Department in the Inland Revenue Office, Somerset House. I don't think that his official duties took up much of his time, for he found abundant leisure to write farces, paint impossible landscapes on tinted paper, and make himself agreeable in genteel society, where, from his amiable manners and comic acquirements, he was highly popular. The mammas were not very anxious about him on account of their daughters one way or the other, for it

was generally understood that he had a hopeless attachment for a marchioness, who wrote Latin verses and played the violoncello, and was thereby condemned to perpetual celibacy. He was good enough, as I have said, to write the farce of "The Kiss and the Kick" for us; and he was, in virtue of his indubitably vast theatrical experience, appointed stage manager, acting manager, prompter, and general director of our dramatic entertainments. There wasn't much plot in his farce, but there was a great deal of fun. The point on which the piece seemed to turn was this: that a Chevalier Somebody stole a kiss from the Marquise de Somebody Else, and that the Marquis, her injured husband, coming in at the very nick of time, revenged himself upon the Chevalier by inflicting on him a violent kick in the skirts of his brocaded coat. The scene of the piece had originally been laid in England—at Camberwell, if I remember rightly—and the Chevalier, under the name of Prupper, was to have worn a grass-green coat with brass basket buttons, a white hat, speckled stockings, and nankeen inexpressibles; but, as the ladies thought that hoops and powder would look pretty—they had seen Mr. Harley and Miss Leclercq in "A game at Romps" at the Princess's—and as the gentlemen had no objection to bag wigs and swords (though some were slightly timorous about the effect of shorts and silk stockings till padding was suggested by the artful Captain Slyboots), the venue was changed to Versailles, and the kick was supposed to be inflicted for the kiss given in the palmy days of Louis the Fifteenth. Now, as a malignant fate would have it, Guffoon, who had the distribution of the parts, "cast" me—that was the term he used—for the Marquis, Arabella for the Marchioness, *and Captain Slyboots for the Chevalier.* I winced a good deal at this; for, though no sensible husband ought to have any objection to his pretty wife being kissed (in fun) by an intimate friend—don't we do it all round in our game of forfeits at Christmas?—I could not bear the idea of Captain Slyboots' moustached lips touching my Arabella's cheek; of course he was only to kiss her cheek. I remonstrated with my wife, I privately entreated Guffoon to change the "casts;" I proposed, time after time, to change parts

with Slyboots, offering to let him kick me with spurs on if he chose; but all to no avail. Everybody, friends included, declared that I was cut out for the Marquis; and at last, for fear of seeming to be jealous, and consequently ridiculous, I consented to waive my objection. "But what a kick I will give him," I thought to myself, "on the night of performance, to be sure."

Would you believe it, that on the very first rehearsal of the farce, Captain Slyboots coolly told me that of course he should kiss Arabella! I pointed out to him that such a proceeding at this stage was not only highly indecorous but wholly unnecessary; that a kiss was an operation that needed no rehearsing, and that both kissing and kicking could be postponed till the grand night. But my objections were scarcely uttered, before there arose from the audience (for we had a large audience at all the rehearsals) such a Babel of laughter and remonstrance, that I was almost stunned. "I ought to know better;" "I was paying a bad compliment to my wife;" "Of course Captain Slyboots must kiss her," and the like. Even old Lady Fang shook her snuff-box at me, and said "Fie, fie, jealous man!" Some of them called me Bluebeard; and Miss Grenadier Pigeon quoted the lines about the "green-eyed monster." Miss Almond Tumbler told me plainly that I ought to be ashamed of myself; and my wife evinced such unmistakeable signs of beginning to cry, that I bowed my head and submitted. "Kiss her, Captain," I said in a faint voice. Somehow, that kiss took a long time to rehearse; but when I really heard a good sounding smack, I rushed on to the stage—the carpet of the back drawing room, I mean, and was about to assuage my wrath in kicks—in kicks mind, not in a kick, when Ethelred Guffoon seized me round the waist, and from that detestable audience of women in the front drawing-room there arose a cry of "No! no! no! not till *the* night—not till *the* night!" Again did old Lady Fang shake her snuff-box at me: this time she called me "Cruel, spiteful man, to want to kick dear Captain Slyboots more than once." Again did Arabella show symptoms of tears, and again, like a hound as I was, did I bow my head, and, to my

shame and sorrow, submit. So Captain Slyboots kissed Mrs. Symes, and I wasn't allowed to kick him. Alaloo! vengeance!

My friends, this martyrdom went on for nearly a month. We had a rehearsal almost every day, sometimes twice a day. The instant I came back from Broad Street Buildings—and I very frequently missed going altogether, leaving my clerks, Cartooch and Squibber, junior, in charge—they were sure to "call the farce," and Mrs. S. went through her part, and I didn't go through mine, and Captain Slyboots did nothing but laugh and twirl pirouettes upon his military heels.

But on the 6th of February I walked—walked, sir—down to Toeser, my bootmaker, in Jermyn Street, St. James's.

"Toeser," I asked darkly, "are pointed toes worn now?"

"Rounds is most fash'nable," answered that tradesman; "though squares is preferred by county members and agricultoral dooks, as doesn't give no return back on rents, but take it out in taking the chair at the farmers' ordinary. Turnups is low, bein' mostly worn by city gents and Hirish barristers."—I had always passed as a West-end swell with Toeser.

"Make me," I said sternly and gloomily, "a pair of the best Wellingtons—the strongest leather, mind; but they must be varnished, and cut as they are in this coloured print of the Duke de Richelieu, which I will leave with you: let the toes be of the sharpest and hardest you can make. Let there be double soles and iron heels" (for I thought that the affair might end seriously, and that it was as well to be prepared with means for stamping on my enemy), "and let me have them home without fail, by this day week. You understand." Toeser bowed and sniffed at an unfinished boot, his usual mode of expressing acquiescence in the wishes of a customer, and I left the shop with a lightened heart.

The boots came home on the 13th; and I did not go to the office that day, but passed the greater portion of my time in my dressing-room, gloating over the instruments of retribution as they gleamed on their trees. "I *will* kick him, and no mistake," I thought.

By great good fortune it had been settled that, in order to

relieve the monotony of shorts and silk stockings, I was to be a sporting marquis, and to wear buckskins and boots—*bottes à l'écuyère*, I think Guffoon called them. His Imperial Majesty Napoleon the Third wears similar boots when he goes out hunting.

I drove down to Broad Street Buildings for a couple of hours next morning—the morning of *the* day, just to see how things were getting on. Everything was progressing smoothly for the performance. Simmons's men had brought the portable theatre and scenery; the costumes were to come from Nathan's; the supper was ordered, the supply of extra waiters laid on, the invitations duly sent out and responded to. I felt in high spirits, and giving my groom a holiday, took an omnibus back to Brompton, and arrived at Arabella Lodge about two in the afternoon.

I found my wife in her morning gown, and a flood of tears, on the sofa. With one hand she held her handkerchief to her face, in the other she clutched a letter.

"What is the matter, my poppet?" I said, caressingly, thinking that Simmons's men and the extra waiters had been too much for her nerves.

"G-g-g-g-gone," she sobbed.

"Who's gone?" I asked, thinking, perhaps, that our Admirable Crichton, the footboy, might, as a finishing stroke of genius, have absconded with the plate-basket.

"G-o-o-o-ONE AWAY," she repeated, holding out the letter.

I seized the fatal epistle, I recognised the horribly familiar handwriting, and I read *this*:—

"MY DEAR MRS. SYMES (*his* dear Mrs. Symes, indeed!)—I much regret to say that I shall not be able to fill my part in your private theatricals of this evening. I have received orders from the Horse Guards to join my regiment at Bhowaljuggerpore, without a moment's delay. I leave by the twelve o'clock train for Alexandria, *viâ* Dover and Marseilles, *en route* for Calcutta. Pray apologise for me to all our friends, especially to your husband, whom I am sincerely sorry to rob of *his legiti-*

mate retaliation. I will write at length from Marseilles."—(*Will* he write at length from Marseilles?) "Most truly yours,

"VULPUS REYNARD LUPUS SLYBOOTS."

I crushed up the abominable epistle in my hand; I folded my arms, and assuming the majestic look of Lucius Junius Brutus when he—but I really forget what he was doing when he did it—I said to Mrs. Symes—

"Madam"—I had never called her "Madam" but once before in my life, and that was when she was a Miss, and I apologised for treading on her toes while dancing with her at the Caledonian ball. "Madam, if she wasn't such an intolerable old catamaran that no human being could live with her, and be alive at the end of the week, I'd send you home to your mother. As it is, you will be kind enough to put off the absurd, disgusting, degrading tomfoolery of to-night. Say you are ill—that I am ill. Say, if you like, that I have cut my throat, and shall be back in a week." I was so agitated that I did not know what I said.

I left my wife in hysterics; sent her maid to her, and rushing out, called a Hansom cab, and told the cabman to drive me into town. I alighted at Essex Street, in the Strand, scarcely knowing where I was going, and found myself somehow on the pier and aboard a steamer. I was landed at the Old Shades Pier; if I had been landed at Copenhagen it would have been all the same to me. As I was moodily threading my way towards Thames Street, (as a long cut towards Broad Street Buildings) a little ragged urchin came tumbling head over heels before me, and importuned me to buy cigar-lights. I never did so cruel, so mean, so cowardly a thing in my life; but I could nor resist the instinct of being revenged on *somebody*. I caught the boy in a favourable position, and I gave him *one sounding kick* that sent him flying among the rabble rout of his companions with a howl that would have awakened the Seven Sleepers.

. . . . . .

P.S.—Arabella and I are reconciled now. She has confessed

to me, with many tears and kisses, that she never liked Captain Slyboots, and always thought him deceitful. Besides, old Lady Fang says that he has been engaged for years to his cousin, Miss De Loup.

I am happy again; though occasionally nervous that Lady Fang should find out that we are city people; but if Captain Slyboots ever comes back from India, and I meet him, I—I—I—I—I'll most certainly *cut him*.

THE MURDEROUS ISCHVOSTCHIK.

You will imagine, if you please, that this is the very depth of winter in St. Petersburg—and that the following incidents occurred during the reign of the late Emperor Nicholas. Everything is frozen: water, milk, wine, brandy, meat, poultry, game, and fish, the tears in the eyes, the breath in the nostrils, the words (excuse the hyperbole) on the lips. The sentinels take only twenty-five minute turns on guard, and are mildly warned that they will be "warmed" to the extent of five hundred blows with a stick, if they go to sleep; for to sleep in the cold is Death. Wherever balls are given, wherever the theatres are open, before the palaces and before the great hotels, there are huge circular furnaces, with an iron cupola above, supported on pillars, round which the coachmen and droschky-drivers gather to warm themselves: otherwise they would be frozen on their boxes. Droschkies drive down the Neva to Cronstadt, and the carriage roads on the frozen river are bordered with evergreens. The bridges are taken away and laid up in ordinary. The statues in the Summer Garden are swathed in hay-bands for fear their marble noses and toes should be frostbitten. You no longer see human beings in the street: you see instead huge balls made up of fur pelisses, waddling through the snow, and through whose folds you can discern neither sex nor age. Ivan the moujik has only his sheepskin *touloupe;* but he has turned the wooly side in, and is warm. The wild beasts in the great forests in the government of St. Petersburg are beginning to have bad times of it. Several bears have ventured into the

very suburbs of the city, and have been shot therein, preferring a warm bellyful of powder and ball to sucking their paws in the bitter cold; and an old wolf who lives on the outskirts of some marshes in Finland has been heard to remark to his nephew that he does not remember so hard a winter since the invasion of 1812.

There is a grand masked ball to-night at the Bolschoi Theatre. We have paid our five roubles for a ticket; let us bid our droschky-driver wait, bestowing on him a fifty copeck piece to refresh himself with "vodka," while we join in the mazy dance, leave our sable pelisse (if we are wealthy enough to possess one) in the *vestiaire:* don a plain black domino and a mask, and allow yon thoughtful-looking servant in the imperial livery to conduct us into the *salle de danse.* Soh! we are in the thick of it.

Wondrous thing for Russia, we do not catch a glimpse of one single military uniform in the whole brilliant theatre. Where are the plumed casques, the gleaming epaulettes and aiguillettes, the embroidered tunics, the dazzling gauntlets and buffleteries? They must be somewhere here, and as we thread our way through the throng we seem to hear, from time to time, the clank of a pair of spurs and the clatter of a sabretasche, unmistakeably denoting that beneath some of these dominos are concealed generals-adjutant and *aides-de-camp de l'Empereur.* There is a mass of masquers in fancy dresses, not the faded trumpery to which you have been accustomed in England and France, but glittering apparel—rich silks and velvets show their sheen, lace and embroidery dazzle you. But it is not among the giddy crowds of waltzers and dancers of schottisches and polkas that we seek the real *delices* of the evening. We are in quest of mystery, of occult intrigues, of puzzling equivoques, of inscrutable *quid pro quos*, and, if we will seek diligently and observantly for them, we shall be able to reap a rich harvest wherewith to satisfy our curiosity.

Ever flitting, and glimmering, and pullulating among the votaries of Terpsichore (oh! thrice-hackneyed phrase) like will-o'-the-wisps, are these dominos. Pink dominos, cherry-coloured

dominos, amber satin dominos, cream-coloured dominos, black dominos, and these last in far greater profusion than those of gayer hues. Grand disguises are these dominos—ample shrouds that veil the mysteries of love or hatred, or more harmless wit and mirth. Only now and then the little foot, peeping timorously, mouse-like, from beneath the heavy drapery, or a breath of hot wind stirring the black lace vallance of the mask, and disclosing a white rounded chin beneath, will tell the secret that the wearer belongs to the softer sex. These dominos speak in no shrill, discordant gibberish, as do their *effrontées* sisters in Paris or London. They whisper discreet calumnies in your ear; they stab you silently with keen little daggers of witty inuendo; they bid you pluck a roseleaf from a bouquet, and straightway you are aware that the secret of your heart of hearts is known to some one. Tiny gloved hands come from these domino folds, slip little billets into your waistcoat pocket, and disappear behind the jealous curtain. Rendezvoux are made, reconciliations effected, the preliminaries of duels settled, vows of passionate love exchanged, all in a noiseless *chuchottement*. The whole scene is one huge Haarlem organ of secretiveness, but with the *vox humana* stop on.

Stalking majestically through the dense mass of mystifiers and mystified, is a tall, stately, stalwart figure, draped from head to foot in a black domino, and closed mask. If you happen to have a friend in the ball-room, ten to one that he will clutch your arm, and murmur, in a half-amused, half-terrified whisper: "*Chut!* that is the Czar! His Majesty is amusing himself. Let us get out of his way." But if you stroll behind the orchestra, where masquers are sipping lemonade and eating ices (for the heat of the crowd and the stoves render both most acceptable luxuries), it is far from improbable that you will meet another tall, stalwart figure, accoutred in a precisely similar manner, and stalking along as stately (albeit he may have a saucy little black satin domino on his arm) as his prototype in the ball-room. And again, ten chances to one, if you ramble into the brilliant *foyer*, you will find tall black-domino number three, lounging on one of the crimson velvet-covered settees.

Go farther yet into the great refreshment saloon, tall black domino number four is seated at a marble table, treating an amber-satin domino to champagne and macaroon. Farther, and still farther, right up into the top tier of boxes, and leaning over the balcony, moodily contemplating the mad scene of gaiety beneath, is tall black domino number five.

"*Decidement*," says Mademoiselle Amenaïde Zizine, of the Imperial French Theatre, a charming *soubrette*, famous for the ease and impudence with which she "chaffs" the Emperor at masquerades. "*Decidement*," says Mademoiselle Amenaïde (in cherry-coloured silk) to Lolotte, her *camarade* and *premier sujet* of the *corps de ballet*, "*Le père Nicolas* will not be here to-night. I have spoken to at least half-a-dozen tall black dominos (*des monstres, ma chere*), and they have answered me in Russ. As if anybody ever understood Russ—*cette chienne de tangue*."

"But perhaps the Emperor wouldn't speak French, and answered you in Russ to mystify you, *pour l'intriguer, ma mie*."

"*Tiens!* Can he speak Russ, the Père Nicolas?" exclaims Mademoiselle Amenaïde, in great wonderment. "I thought he could only speak French, the Emperor. But there's General Gueldanoff—I know the old wretch by his limp—I'll go and say something to make him smart." And off trips Mademoiselle Amenaïde Zizine, of the Imperial French Theatre.

Now, the initiated in the ways of the Winter Palace and the secrets of the back stairs, know that the Emperor has occasionally found his colossal form, dominoed as it might have been, too easily recognizable at masquerades; and that immediate recognition has occasionally interfered with the Imperial schemes of nocturnal amusement. To obviate this annoying *contretemps*, his Majesty has hit upon the notable device of choosing among his aides-de-camp certain noble Russians of his exact height, and of a gait and bearing resembling his own as closely as possible, who are instructed to perambulate the ball-room, and to speak French or Russ when addressed, as the Imperial whim may dictate, or as the furtherance of the Imperial plans may render necessary. Sometimes, indeed, when the stock of tall aides-de-camp has run short, the Autocrat has been compelled

to resort to the ranks of his faithful regiment of Préobajinski Guards, and to select, from the biggest and handsomest of the grenadier company, a duplicate Romanoff or two. The importance of thus having six Imperial Richmonds or Romanoffs in the field instead of one must be visible to the meanest comprehension; and those versed in such matters, say that the Préobajinski Richmonds were, in the long-run, found to be the most serviceable; for those honest fellows, being well supplied with rouble notes to comfort themselves with punch *à la Romaine* withal, and being totally unused to such a scene of splendour, could only utter, when spoken to, guttural exclamations of astonishment in their native Sclavonic; whereas the aides-de-camp were sometimes treacherous enough to pass themselves off for the veritable Emperor, and to poach upon the Imperial domains in the most shameless manner.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the tall black dominos are the only sons of Anak in these halls of dazzling light. The Russians, gentle and simple, (save the *maloi Ruski*, or little Russians) run large; and there are scores of stalwart forms here to-night, both in black and parti-coloured dominos, and in fancy dresses. See, here is one, a fine-looking fellow too, six feet and more in his shoes, dressed—saints in heaven who sing assoilzie us!—like the Enemy of mankind. He wears a dreadful mask with red flaming eyes, and a pair of formidable horns. He has a shiny-scaly body, claws, and an admirably-constructed cloven-foot, a tail of immoderate dimensions, and *such* a pitchfork. As he swaggers along, brandishing that terror to sinners, the masquers give way before him, crying out "*Gospodin Tchort! Gospodin Tchort!*" (Lord Lucifer!) I am afraid that in France or England this diabolical costume would not be admissible, and would be equally tobooed with those of clown, harlequin, and pantaloon; but in Russia the arch-fiend is an Institution. He is the real old theologico-Gothic Lucifer, with horns, with hoofs, and a tail, who flew away with King Arthur's tailor, and tempted St. Anthony, and was beaten by Banagher, and had his nose tweaked by St. Dunstan. The Russians have a great respect, and a terror not unmixed with humour, for him.

They look on him with a sort of grotesque fear, and call him lord. And, indeed, it has been known for some centuries that "the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman."

Gospodin Lucifer, then (we won't call him by his plainest name, for fear of wounding the susceptibilities of our younger readers, who are not yet quite emancipated from the fear of "Bogey"), goes roaring about, cracking pandemonaical jokes to those around him, squeezing the prettiest of the *débardeurs*, who, laughing, take him by the horns and shake him, and occasionally proguing a male domino with his pitchfork, who turns round and asks him, angrily, what he means. But he is a very good-tempered fiend, is Gospodin Tchort, and is highly popular among the ladies. He treats half a dozen of them to an expensive supper in the grand refreshment saloon, refusing, however, to take off his mask, and consuming prodigious quantities of champagne through the pasteboard lips thereof. He speaks only Russ, with a strong German accent: and the word goes forth that Gospodin Tchort is an eccentric Livonian nobleman. Mademoiselle Amenaïde Zizine is good enough at a later period of the evening to engage him in conversation, and he whispers one little word in the ear of her black velvet mask—whether in German-Russ, or not, I am not informed; but it is certain that half-an-hour afterwards, Mademoiselle Amenaïde, meeting Lolotte (who is on the very best terms by this time with a young Circassian officer of the Czar's Mahometan escort), tells her in confidence that the good-tempered demon is the Evil One indeed.

"All earthly things," the poet Campbell tells us, and we know it, "must come to gloom," and even a Russian *bal masqué* must have an end. The champagne has told its tale; the supper is a mass of fishy, saccharine, and gallinaceous fragments; the fiddlers are tired; fatigue has furrowed long streaks in the rouge on the dancers' cheeks; the white kid gloves begin to get cloudy at the seams; it is October with the bouquets, and they shed their leaves; and the furnace fires are burning low without. There is a rush to the *vestiaire;* Cinderella's ball is over; and the brilliantly-clad merrymakers are transformed into shapeless

bales of fur pelisses again. There is a howling at the door for carriages and droschky-sledges; torches flare and policemen rush about savagely, cuffing recalcitrant Jehus; and then Gospodin Tchort—who has taken off his diabolical mask, slipped it into a side pocket of the enormous fur pelisse in which he has muffled himself, and replaced it by an undress military cap—moves sedately and serenely. It is plain that Gospodin Tchort must be an officer in some regiment or other.

"*Que diable!* where is Axenti?" says the Gospodin to himself, in the purest Parisian French.

But the missing Axenti is seemingly nowhere to be found; and, after waiting some ten minutes, the Gospodin is fain to hail an ordinary sledge. The driver, a sullen-looking fellow, with a huge red beard, asks him whither he wishes to go? He who was late a demon, responds that he wishes to be put down at the corner of Mala Millionaïa, over against the monolith erected to the memory of the First Alexander. The Ischvostchik (such is the sledge drivers' generic appellation) gives a sulky "Da, das!" (Yes, yes) and bestrides his seat. Gospodin Tchort, muffling himself more than ever in his *schoub* (pelisse), mounts the sledge too, and off they go over the hard snow.

Now, know all men, that about this time murders were frightfully prevalent in St. Petersburg; and note, above all, that the majority of these murders have been committed by Ischvostchiks —by droschky or sledge drivers. One was knouted to death only the other day, at the top of the Nevski, for the murder of a German commercial traveller, whose lifeless corpse he was detected in the very act of stuffing through a hole he had broken in the ice of the Neva, opposite the Cadetten-linie of Wassily-Ostrow. To make the example more terrible in his case, the police had issued an ordonnance, commanding all the Ischvostchiks in St. Petersburg to attend and witness the execution. There is a dark horror in the prevalent belief that among a certain class of the Ischvostchiks there exists a species of Thuggee; that all the droschky-drivers coming from one particular village in the environs of the capital, are, from their youth upwards, as professed and ruthless murderers as the votaries of

Bohwanie, or the partizans of the Old Man of the Mountain; and that they take advantage of the occasional somnolency of their fares (due to the intense cold) to fall upon, rob, and slay them.

Now this sullen man, with the red beard, must evidently be a murderous Ischvostchik; for instead of driving his fare, as he was directed, towards the monolith of the First Alexander (which is right opposite the Winter Palace), he conducts him, instead, over the Novi-Most, or Great Iron Bridge, and so towards the vast cemetery of Wassily-Ostrow. And he must be a murderer—this rubicund ruffian—for, as the vehicle slides along the deserted "linie," or streets, I, who am Asmodeus for the nonce, and ubiquitous, see him take from the folds of his greasy caftan a heavy hatchet, poise it in his murderous grip, and try the edge with his huge, misshapen thumb, casting a cunning glance, as he does so, over his shoulder, at the stranger whom he is conveying, perchance to deadly doom.

Who, to the peril of his precious body, worn out with fatigue, and oppressed by the frigid narcotic in the winter night air, is dozing behind his driver. Little wots he now, Gospodin Tchort, as to whether he is journeying towards Alexander's monolith or towards Wassily-Ostrow's dank burial-ground. Gospodin Tchort is tranquilly dreaming, and I, being Asmodeus, and omniscient *pro tem.*, know what he is dreaming about. Little recks he now of monolith or Winter Palace, ice or snow, droschky-drivers or French actresses. He wanders in his sleep by the side of the blue Bosphorus; he sees the glories of the Golden Horn, his eyes are dazed by the minarets of Stamboul and the great dome of Sophia. He sees the Padishah of Roum float down the stream in his gilded caïque, towards the valley of Sweet Waters; he wanders in the mazes of the Bezesteen; the secretest gardens of the old seraglio are open to him; and then, suddenly, by the charming irrationality of dreams, he is transported to a town in Southern Russia, and sees a sign post with an inscription, placed there by Catherine the Superb, "This is the road to Byzantium."

Waken, hapless sluggard, for the Philistines are upon thee.

Waken, drowsy traveller, for death is imminent. Waken, man in the fur pelisse, for the murderous Ischvostchik has got thee close to the solitary churchyard, has turned him round on his seat, has raised his sharp hatchet. Waken, for the fate of an Empire—

Gospodin Tchort wakes. Wakens, murmuring something about a Treaty. Wakens to find the murderer standing over him with geaming eyes and uplifted hatchet.

"I demand thy money," cries the Ischvostchik, seeing that he cannot slay his victim sleeping.

No other man in the world could have done it. No other man than—Gospodin Tchort. With lightning-like presence of mind he stands up on the seat of the sledge; he dashes on his fiend's mask, he throws off his pelisse, and shows his fiend's dress. He stands there in the sharp, green moonlight, plainly and palpably the Enemy of mankind—the Evil One.

"*I demand thy soul!*" he thunders.

"*Tchort, Tchort!*" screams the Ischvostchik, and falls down, stiff and stark, between the horse's hind-feet.

Gospodin Tchort descends from his eminence, and stirs the Ischvostchik somewhat disdainfully with his foot. "Get up, dog!" he says, in commanding tones.

But the dog never stirs a limb, nor moves a muscle. The Gospodin routs him up again with his foot; but he is as motionless as before. He stoops down, and shakes him by the arm; but the member falls to the frozen ground, flaccid and inert. He calls him again and again, fruitlessly. He places his hand on his heart, but there is no pulsation. He looks on his face; and the green moonlight shows that his features are ghastly and rigid, that the eyes are fixed, and that the mouth is wide open, and grinning horribly. It is very plain that the DOG is DEAD.

Dead he is beyond mistake: dead as any door-nail. In his great terror at what he, poor superstitious wretch, doubtless imagined to be a supernatural visitation come to punish him for his sins, the chord of life has snapped; and the murderous Ischvostchik is gone to his account.

A more timorous man than Gospodin Tchort would have fled

as fast as ever his legs could carry him; for to have aught to do with a dead, or even a wounded body, in Russia, is a matter of serious moment, and one sometimes highly dangerous to the surviving party. You must not raise a man from the ground who has been unfortunate enough to be run over; you must not assist one who has fallen into a pit; it is questionable even whether you may jump into the water to save a fellow-creature from drowning. Such duties are the exclusive province of the police; and if you wish to preserve your roubles and your repose, the less you meddle with that municipal institution the better.

A weaker man than our Gospodin would at least have been sorely perplexed to know what to do with the ugly burden thus unexpectedly thrown on his hands; but our diabolical friend appears to have made up his mind with very little difficulty as to the proper course to be adopted under the circumstances. The horse is quietly snuffing the ground, as if in a futile search for some impossible herbage beneath that icy crust, and the reins lie idly on his back. The Gospodin (whose strength appears to be Herculean) drags up the body of the murderous Ischvostchik by the arms, flings him across the seat of the sledge, picks up the whip, bestrides the driver's seat himself, gives an encouraging "*puiamo*," "go on," to the horse; and then, on that wintry morning, had you been there, you might have seen in the weird moonlight the strange spectacle of a man in a huge fur pelisse, with a demon's mask gleaming above it, driving a sledge away from the great cemetery of Wassily-Ostrow, while behind him was the body of a bearded, caftaned man, whose arms flapped, whose booted legs dangled, in the helplessness of death.

And whither speeds the demon driver? To the Neva's banks, with that same sharp hatchet to cleave a cavity in the ice and consign the would-be murderer's body to the swift, sure current that runs straight into the Gulf of Finland, carrying its dead with it, and telling no tales? To the umbrageous pine-woods on the Ladoga road? To the ruins of the last conflagration, where there are holes and masses of rubbish in plenty that will hold a score of bodies such as this? Not at all. The

infernal Ischvostchik drives coolly to the sixteenth linie, where there is a police-station; and it is a fact that as he plys the whip he hums an air from "Robert le Diable."

He passes one or two of the little wooden huts, where the *Boutotsniks*, or watchmen armed with pole-axes, dwell. One sleepily challenges him; and he answers, "a friend!" and drives on. The other is comfortably asleep in his timber cabin; and, at the best of times, there is but scant vigilance to be expected from these guardians of the night, who are more than suspected of occasionally doing a little murder on their own account. Gospodin Tchort mutters some remarks between his teeth, not at all complimentary to *Boutotsniks* in general, as he passes the second hut, and says that he "will see to it." See to what?

At the door of the police-station, or *siège*, there is a big police-soldier, in a long, gray gabardine, who gives a howl of amazement as the strangely-laden and more strangely-conducted chariot stops before him. True to his police instincts, however, he makes a movement to fall upon and arrest, as a preliminary measure, the being who is bold enough to ride about with a dead body, but Gospodin Tchort descends from his seat, pushes the *polizei* with his arm amicably on one side, and says:—

"Carry that carcass in-doors, Axenti-Ivanovitch, and let me see the major of police immediately."

"My name is Fedor," the soldier begins; "and who are you——"

"SILENCE!" continues Gospodin Tchort; "hear and obey!" He is evidently accustomed to command, to be heard, and to be obeyed; for the soldier, with a blank look of astonishment, and a suppressed grumble, presently does his bidding. He wakes up the police major, who comes with a very unclean-looking blue pocket-handkerchief twisted round his bullet head, and his uniform coat but half-buttoned over his striped flannel waistcoat.

"*Schtotakoi*! What is it?" asks the police major, who is very sleepy, and very peevish, rubbing his eyes.

Gospodin Tchort takes, quite uninvited, a chair, and in a few succinct phrases tells the story of his night's adventure, account-

ing for his mask by alluding to the masquerade. As he proceeds, the police major brightens up to a thorough state of wide wakefulness, shakes his head ominously, and, dipping a pen into a battered inkstand, begins to fill up a printed form. He looks at the awful testimony of the drama that has been enacted, and which, beginning to stiffen now, lies hideously stark on a guard-bed, and shakes his head more ominously than ever.

"A pretty story, indeed," he says. "And who is to believe it, pray? There has been murder here. We will begin by putting the bracelets on you, my little brother, and then we will submit you to an interrogatory. Fedor, go for the surgeon, the *greffier*, and the handcuffs, and, Michael Prosperovitch, take off his mask."

"STOP!" cries Gospodin Tchort, in an accent as commanding as before. "Police major, you are an *assiot*—an ass—Behold!" He waves the soldiers imperatively back. He removes his mask, only for an instant, and replaces it. The police major starts back as he meets the stern gaze of a pair of full gray eyes, as *his* orbs of vision dwell upon a magnificent countenance, somewhat full of flesh, with a lofty brow, a rounded chin, and a firmly-chiselled mouth; a twisted moustache, dark curly hair, growing somewhat bald towards the crown, and a short crisp whisker invading the cheek. He starts back; and upon my word, if Gospodin Tchort had not caught him by the arm, I think he would have fallen on his knees before him.

"Let the man's body be opened," the Gospodin says. "He must have been suffering from some internal disease for death to attack him so suddenly. And now get me another sledge, and let me go home, for I will ride no more in that hateful carriage. Let the horse be sent to the fire brigade, and see that the sledge is sold for the benefit of the poor."

The major's private sledge is brought out; his best horse harnessed to it; his costliest furs laid on the seat. Gospodin Tchort takes off his mask and puts on his undress cap again; but he entirely conceals his features behind the collar of his pelisse.

"You will drive me to the monolith of Alexander, opposite the Mala Millionnaïa," he says to the coachman. "Make haste, and gallop." He jumps in; the driver cracks his whip, and they are gone.

"Fedor Nicolaïevitch," says the major of police very sternly, when the strange visitor has departed—"Fedor Nicolaïevitch, son of a dog! it strikes me that you did not pay sufficient attention or respect to yonder well-considered and honoured lord. Corporal of the night, you will take care that Fedor Nicolaïevitch has eighty blows of the stick, at eight o'clock, for want of proper respect to his superiors." And the police major, yawning, lights his cigarette, and goes to bed.

By and by, just as the unhappy Fedor is beginning to howl for his breach of etiquette, the *yemstchik*, who has driven Gospodin Tchort to his destination, comes back to the police station.

"He must be a great lord—perhaps an aide-de-camp of the Gossudar, the Emperor," he says. "He gave me a 'blue' (a five rouble note), and I watched him go straight into the Winter Palace. Wilt thou drink with me, Michael Prosperovitch? Ah! and so our brother Fedor is eating of the stick, is he?"

The autopsy of the body of the murderous Ischvostchik is made by the surgeon to the police, and it is found that the unhappy man had been for a long time suffering under acute disease of the heart. Far gone as he was in that dreadful malady, any sudden shock or excitement was sufficient to cause death; and it was perfectly natural, that the revulsion of feeling caused by that which he believed to be the appearance of the Evil One himself should end fatally. A lengthened report of the circumstances is drawn up by the major of police, and is sent to the Winter Palace. Some weeks afterwards, that functionary receives a miniature, set in gold, representing an officer in the uniform of the Chevalier Guards, with a star on his breast, and the red ribbon of St. Andrew *en sautoir*. The officer's face is stern, but handsome, eminently handsome. He has full gray eyes, a lofty brow, a rounded chin, a firmly-chiselled mouth, a twisted moustache, dark curly hair, some-

what inclining to baldness towards the crown, and a short, crisp whisker invading the cheek. And beneath the miniature is the initial N.

I forgot to state that the story of the Murderous Ischvostchik does *not* get into the St. Petersburg newspapers. We manage those things better in Russia.

THE JOURNEYMAN CARPENTER.

Joe Rabbets was sprung from a respectable family in the town, and whilom borough, of Shrimpington-Super-Mare. In fact, the Rabbetses had always held their heads high in Shrimpington. Before a king, whose name nobody knew, took the charter of incorporation away, and degraded the borough into the Hundred of Haddockbone, a Rabbets had been mayor. If Charles the Second, coming from Cæsarville to St. Becketsbury on his way to London at the Restoration, had turned aside, as I did, at Daisey-bridge Hill, Rabbets, mayor, would have presented him with an address, and would have been thenceforward Sir John Rabbets. The family had become reduced in circumstances, even as their native town had decayed. They had taken to small shop-keeping, mackeral fishing, and to divers industrial handicrafts; but no Rabbets had as yet been known to accept parochial relief; and there was sure, once in a generation, to be a rich Rabbets, who lived in London, and was quite the gentleman. A Rabbets in George the Fourth's time had positively taken the chair at a dinner at Cordwainers' Hall. Even the Rabbetses who in their youth were inclined to be "black sheep," morally, and ran away from their indentures, or their sweethearts, or Squire Gervoise's gamekeepers, like William Shakspeare—though they did not always proceed to London, hold horses at the door of the Globe Theatre, and afterwards write immortal plays—were yet accustomed, enlisting in Britannic Majesties' land and sea forces, to perform prodigies of valour, and were speedily promoted to be boatswains or quartermasters. There was a Captain Rabbets, too, who was killed in Spain.

Philoprogenitiveness was strongly devoloped in the Rabbetses,

and Daddy Rabbets, Joe's father, a boat builder, who had a craze about "brick-boats," had a prodigious family. Bob took to the old man's business. Ned was apprenticed to him, afterwards doing journey-work. Bill went into the navy, and afterwards into the coast-guard. Sam, who was wild, set up a beershop, went to America, married, and was reported to have a "power" of negro slaves. Sal and Bet went out to service, the former afterwards marrying John Dumplingbeare, of the "Kings and Key." Nel, who was a cripple, stayed at home by the inglenook, and was much beloved by her brothers and sisters; and Patience was adopted by her uncle in London—the rich Rabbets of that generation—who intended, it was said, to make a lady of her, and who, as a wholesale stationer in Sise Lane, City, and under the complimentary cognomen of "Ready-money Rabbets," was much respected by his ward and company, and by the public at large.

Joe Rabbets was the very youngest of this numerous troop; and it was settled almost before he was out of long-clothes, that he was to be a carpenter. Everybody said that he had just the head for a carpenter; so soon as he could walk and speak, he seemed thoroughly to acquiesce in the arrangement which had been made on his behoof; and a sixpenny box of tools being bought for him to play with, jagged and chipped his juvenile fingers with great cheerfulness and contentment. It would have seemed, however, that Nature had in the outset held contrary views respecting Joe's "mission" in Shrimpington and the world —certainly the number of pugilistic encounters which chequered his schoolboy life, and the highly-coloured gallery of bleeding noses, swollen lips, scarified knuckles, scratched cheeks, and eyes in a state of ecchymosis, which he was continually bringing home for the inspection of an admiring family circle, went somewhat far to favour the theory now and then broached, that Joe Rabbets was naturally intended for a prize-fighter, and, with weight, time, and training, would beat the Champion of England hollow, and bear off the belt triumphantly.

Although Joe was not often the defeated party, he neverthe-

less certainly did get, when he was about twelve years of age, a tremendous mauling from Bill Miggles, surnamed the "Bullock," who was the blacksmith's eldest apprentice. But this truculent young Mulciber was at least sixteen years old, and nearly double Joe's size and weight. The cause of dispute was the same that set Paris and Menelaus by the ears—the old, old story. The Helen was a little dark-eyed lass of twelve, exactly Joe's age, and his cousin to boot, whom the incipient blacksmith met as she was returning from school, and, in spite of her tears, her blushes, her entreaties, and her resistance, forcibly saluted on both cheeks. She screamed for Joe—she had always a hankering for Joe—and he fortuitously coming round the corner on his way from settling a slight difficulty with the baker's boy, after leaving his adversary washing his eyes and nose at the pump, and beaten to his heart's content, rescued the little beauty in distress, and to use the vernacular of pugilism, "slipped in to" the swart Miggles in the twinkling of a bed-post. Joe got a sound thrashing from that big young blacksmith; but he left on his adversary's face marks somewhat similar to those which you might examine on "cliffs that have been rent asunder."

Joe was apprenticed soon after this to old Fry the carpenter—a red-headed man, who deplored that Joe would never be serious enough for the undertaking business, which was a succursal to his trade, but was yet constrained to acknowledge the skill and quickness of the lad. Joe read a good deal during his apprenticeship: not novels, tales, or poetry—he was the most literal young fellow you could well meet with, and had not a grain of imagination in him—but hard-headed, crabbed books, that were as dry reading as though the leaves had been compressed sawdust: books about cones and sections, and forces and balances, full of intricate diagrams. He could not, or did not, invent anything himself, but he was a great improver and restorer. He mended clocks; he doctored up easy-chairs; he found out places for shelves where shelves had never been before; and the number of additions he could make to the capabilities of a chest of drawers, was really surprising. Joe never spoilt anything, never wasted timber,

never "scamped" a job. He was as sober and industrious as the severest terms of his indentures could require, and he went to church every Sunday morning and evening. He used to see his cousin Loo, the little lass who had been kissed by the blacksmith, home from church sometimes. Joe was in the receipt of wages long before his apprenticeship had expired; and at nineteen he was earning twenty shillings a week. He wouldn't have anything to do with the undertaking part of the buisness, however, leaving that to Tom Raven, the other journeyman, who had a dolorous face, naturally, and was for his meekly melancholy manners (he was very great at night over a comic song at the "Kings and Key") extremely popular with bereaved relatives. Joe Rabbets left off fisticuffs as he approached manhood, and took to wrestling, leaping, running, swimming, and other athletic exercises, in which he became a great proficient, and the envy of the growing youth of Shrimpington. He was called "Wopping Joe Rabbets," partly in allusion to his stature—he was over six feet—partly to his bygone pugnacious propensities. He was, in truth, a fine, handsome young fellow, with a cheerful, open countenance, clear blue eyes, curly hair, light whiskers *slightly* inclined to be carroty, an irresistible smile, brawny, muscular limbs: the hands, though (which he was rather inclined to be vain of), small and white; and a frank, manly, and, it must be admitted, boisterous bearing. Such a fund of animal spirits, such a ringing, resonant laugh he had, such a way of swinging his great limbs about, and twirling his ash stick! He was as fond as ever, though he was but a journeyman carpenter, of reading the crabbed books about the cones and sections; and what need I tell you of him, more, save that he was brave and generous, and that I think he would with equal readiness have cast himself headlong from Shakspeare's Cliff, at Cæsarville, as have told a lie.

Now all this time there had been growing up to womanhood, and to womanhood of radiant beauty, the little maiden of the dark eyes whom Bill Miggles had kissed against her will. It was a peculiarity also about this young lady—Loo Rabbets by name, Joe's cousin, as I have said, and daughter of Widow

Rabbets, formerly lodge-keeper to Squire Gervoise, at the Priory, now retired upon a small pension, eked out by a sweetstuff shop—that she, too, was very fond of her book. But in quite a different manner to Joe. Loo was all for fairy-tales, poetry, ghost-stories, and sentimental novels: "The Farmer of Inglewood Forest," and the "Children of the Abbey." She had a pretty fancy for tambour-work and embroidery; she even evinced a decided talent for painting in water-colours; she had a sweet little voice, and a capital ear for music. She had a memory wondrously retentive: could recite whole scenes from Shakspeare, and what is more, seemed to understand the meaning of the poet: the chief prize-holder and show-girl at Miss Twigg's school, the envy and yet the pet of her companions: a girl to be spoilt and fondled and made a lady of, and yet only a poor rheumatic lodge-keeper's daughter!

Tall, handsome, straight as an arrow, graceful; throwing her drapery round her as she walked in a hundred symmetrical folds; hair raven black, eyes flashing hazel, complexion a dusky mellow—her mother was a Miggles, and of old Spanish blood—Loo Rabbets, with her beauty and her talents, had almost everything to make her the pride and wonder of the little town, and to bring about her destruction in this world. The beautiful poor have a dreadful homage paid them. The flatteries of those who surround a Cleopatra in printed calico are awful. From her earliest pinafores there were those to tell the penniless girl that she was handsome and clever, and that her face ought to be her fortune. She listened—Mephistopheles must have grinned to hear with what eagerness. From the cradle she was vain, credulous:—not heartless, but an incorrigible flirt.

And moreover a most delightful country maiden to be made a pet and *protegée* and plaything of. So thought Lady Maud Gervoise at the Priory. In his doting days, the old Squire had *his* "brick-ship," like Daddy Rabbets. His lune consisted in thinking that he was a lady's man; and he married, for the third time, Lady Maud Gulesmain, fifth daughter of the Earl of Shiverdefreeze. She was a fashionable lady, who enjoyed herself

in London thoroughly during the season ; then dragged her doting husband to Paris and the Continent; mid-wintered him at Brighton ; and came to yawn and set the parson and the schoolmaster at loggerheads, and distribute soup and flannels to the bedridden old women, for three months or so in every year, at Shrimpington Priory. She took a violent fancy to little Loo Rabbets when she was quite a child, and before her mother had become too infirm to perform the duties of lodge-keeping. She sent the girl first to Miss Twigg's, instead of suffering her to go, like her peers, to the national school ; and when she was about fourteen, positively took her to live with her at the Priory, and had a governess, who spoke French and played the harp, and painted pictures as beautiful as those in Mr. Belasco's shop in the High Street of St. Becketsbury, and who shared her multifarious accomplishments between Lady Maud's youngest sister, Lady Alethea, aged ten, who was billeted upon the Gervoise premises [his lordship of Shiverdefreeze had never been young, and was much embarrassed], and the lowly child of the lodge-keeper. The rumour ran in Shrimpington that Loo was to be made a lady of, like Daddy Rabbets's daughter whom the mighty wholesale stationer in Sise Lane, City, had adopted. Lady Maud was very kind to her young *protegée*. She boxed her ears sometimes, and told her that she was a little beggar and a little pauper—fine ladies must have their caprices, and their nerves are *so* delicately strung—but she gave her plenty of pastry and blanc-mange, new silk frocks, and workboxes inlaid with Tunbridge ware. She was very nearly as much be-petted and be-praised as her ladyship's lapdog.

When she was, to her sorrow, about seventeen, nothing would suit her patroness, Lady Maud, but to take her to London, where she lived in a fine house in Wilton Crescent, and was often sent for to the drawing-room to display her accomplishments, and then bidden to go to the house-keeper's room and know her station. She went to Paris, and even to the Italian town of Nice, and came back more beautiful and more blooming than ever. She had, as yet, met with only trifling little crosses and humilia-

tions; but the spoon that she was to cup sorrow from was a very long one. She came back, and she, the patronised one, patronised the feminine juvenility of Shrimpington to her heart's content. She gave the girls her old frocks and bonnets. She showed them her drawings, and the newest steps in dancing. She retailed the latest fashionable news of the great world, and of its epitome in little—the Priory. Her poor little handsome head was turned with flattery and folly.

Her cousin Joe, the journeyman carpenter, had been in love with her for years—with a rollicking, jovial, uncompromising, out-spoken affection. He had fought for her as a boy, and would have fought for her again—and died for her—as a man. He had no rivals to fear in the little town. Loo had plenty of admirers; but no one cared to roughen the course of "Wopping Joe Rabbets's" true love. The sturdy young carpenter was beloved as well as feared. The girl was fond of him—very fond of him—at Shrimpington-super-Mare; but at the Priory, Mr. Glossop, Squire Gervoise's gentleman, made eyes at her, at which she smiled, not displeased; and in London, French valets, whiskered couriers, smiling middle-aged butlers even, in the families of substantial noblemen, whispered soft things in her ears. She did not turn those ears away. And more dangerous expressions of admiration came to her from splendid gentlemen with lustrous moustaches, and swinging watchguards, and spurs in the heels of their beautiful shining boots. Little notes, little rings and bracelets, little *bréquet* watches, came to her. She did not send those presents back. Perhaps she did not know from whom they came. She would go back to Shrimpington soon, she thought; have done with flirtation, and marry Joe. She liked Joe. Lady Maud would set Joe up in business for himself, surely, and they would be, oh! so happy. But she was very handsome and very vain, and men are very wicked. She was half a lady's-maid and half a companion; and her mistress was an indolent, selfish Sybarite, who regarded her plaything in about the same light as she looked upon a learned macaw, or a musical-box that played pretty tunes.

Heaven be forbearing to us: the girl fell. She was nineteen years of age. I declare that the noble scoundrel, who crushed the crystal vase of her purity to powder beneath his noble heel, tempted her just as one would tempt a child to be good with sweetmeats—with jewels and fine clothes. This is the way that foolish women are won. He kept his victim from bewailing her lot for a few months—just as the child is kept from crying—with horses and carriages, and fine shows and plays. He took her about, and exhibited her to his noble friends. Then he fell in love with a dancing-woman of the Opera House, and flung his poor plaything by—soiled, crushed, shattered for ever. So there was a rent instead of a girdle, and burning instead of beauty; and the Shrimpington girls talked over Loo Rabbets's downfall at the pump, as the German *mädchen* discussed poor Gretchen's crime at the well. When Loo Rabbets ate and drank now, it was for two. A child was born of her shame.

No man nor child in Shrimpington-super-Mare, old or young, dared tell Joe Rabbets when the news came of his happiness's great wreck. But he learned the evil tidings soon enough. The prattling servants from the Priory came down town. The scandal was buzzed about from the "Godwin's Head" to the "Kings and Key." Joe overheard Raven, who did the undertaking business, talking over the matter with Miggles, now a working blacksmith, who, if report spake true, hammered his wife (in a comparative degree) as well as his anvil. Joe rushed half frantic to the Priory, and demanded an audience of the Lady Maud. It was granted at once. He might have had half-a-dozen audiences for the asking for. The languid lady was rather pleased than otherwise to discourse upon the hideous turpitude of her quondam favourite, on whom she had turned her back, she said, at once, and for ever. She was very eloquent on what she had done for Loo, on the advantages and opportunities she had placed in her way, on the pains she had bestowed upon her education, and her lamentable ingratitude. Her education! It had been better for her to be the dullest parish brat, stammering over a hornbook, and at eight years old sent to field work till her spine

was arched, and the skin of her hands peeled off. The Lady Maud said that Louisa Rabbits was a bad, wicked, ungrateful girl. She declared that she ought to be sent to the treadmill, that she ought to be whipped; she prophesied that she would come to a bad end; she proffered Joseph Rabbits a five-pound note, and advised him to marry Tibbets, her own maid, "a highly respectable young person, who thoroughly knew her station." Heavens and earth! had the miserable girl yonder ever held any station to know? Murmuring some incoherent words of refusal of the money, Joe ran out of the Priory, and so back to Shrimpington. The poor wretch had determined to see his father and brethren once more, and then blow his brains out.

By mercy he paused and was saved from the great sin of self-murder. But for months it seemed likely that Joe Rabbits would go melancholy mad. He spoke to no one, he walked with no one, he scarcely ate or drank, he never opened a book, he worked with a moody, almost ferocious energy. Only once when the blacksmith uttered some taunting words about the lost girl in his presence, he felled that graceless lout to the earth, with one blow of his mighty fist: and, leaving him there stunned and bleeding, walked away without one word.

Joe went away soon afterwards, and worked for Mr. Dawks, the carpenter and joiner, of St. Becketsbury. He was absent two whole years; and when he came back to Shrimpington, time had been good to him, and, for all the awful cicatrice remaining, the wound was healed. So time will comfort you, dear reader, in your bereavement. So time will comfort you, Calypso, though you stand by the lone sea-shore wringing of your hands, while the bark that bears the false Odysseus sinks beneath the horizon for ever. Time is good for us all, although the good grieve longest. Not often does Dido immolate herself for Æneas' sake. We do not forget, but a kind curtain falls between the present moment and the bitter past, and remembrance stirs the veil but seldom. Joe Rabbets, however, was no longer the jovial and rollicking carpenter of yore. He was a very staid and sober young man, cheerful enough, sometimes, but mostly inclined to thought-

fulness and "keeping himself to himself." Of one thing, however, he did not retain an exclusive monopoly, but imparted the intelligence to all who had a right to know it. Joe was about to be married. He had courted and won his master's daughter, Bessy Dawks; who had early seen his sorrow, and had sprinkled him with precious drops from those inexhaustible waters of sympathy, which, Heaven bless them, are always welling up from the hearts of good women. She was not very handsome, Bessy, and she was very small and slight in stature; but the face was a kind one, but the eyes were tender and trusting, but the whole little frame was an image of neatness and simple grace. Bessy was what you term a serious young woman. Dawks, of St. Becketsbury, her papa, was a gruff religionist. Left a widower early, he had undertaken the training of Bessy in conjunction with his sister, a spinster of mature age, who was always in great perturbation regarding the spiritual welfare of her neighbours, and the major part of whose devotional exercises consisted in dismal groaning, well sustained. Between these two professors, Bessy grew up to be serious. The girls sneered at her, and called her a hypocrite; the lads laughed, and called her a little Puritan. If to be meek and humbly religious, charitable, patient, and obedient—if to be this, was to be a Puritan, Bessy Dawks certainly was one. She was the plainest of scholars, and, beyond the "Christians' Reading," her literary circle was confined to a most confusing, but vehement work of very large dimensions, written against Bishops by the Reverend Mr. O'Goggerdan, a separatist of the last century. The violent polemics of this controversialist frightened the meek Bessy Dawks somewhat; but the book was a legacy from her uncomfortable aunt, Hannah; and she prized it exceedingly, and read it assiduously when not occupied with household duties.

The wedding-ring was bought at Prawnby's shop, No. 7 in the High Street, and there was a sober serious wedding at the old church. Daddy Rabbets (now quite superannuated) was moved at the ceremony, in the intervals of floods of tears, to address the clergyman respecting some improvements in boat-

building; but the sexton led him out, and the two had a quiet talk together over a parishioner's grave. Mr. and Mrs. Joe went into housekeeping immediately. Dawks would have given them five hundred pounds down, or taken Joe into partnership with him; but the latter said that he preferred residing at Shrimpington for the present, doing journeywork, for a year or two longer, with old Fry. He took Gummiz's house in Shire Lane, at five shillings a week, Gummiz having bettered himself in the oyster line at St. Becketsbury. Bessy was a capital housekeeper. Dawks insisted on furnishing them, and the reverend Mrs. Canon Challis of Becketsbury, who loved Bessy, although she was a dissenter, sent her such a stock of bed and table linen that Mrs. Whelks of the "Godwin's Head" might have been moved to envy at the view. Joe had some savings. His wages did not go into the tavern-keeper's till, though he took his pint of an evening over the paper, and paid his subscription to his Foresters' lodge. Their home was a picture of cleanliness and comfort, and Joe was reckoned as destined to be one more of the Rabbetses who would hold their heads high in Shrimpington.

Before the year was out, Bessy had a baby—a tremendous boy (the finest boy ever seen, neighbours *loq.:*) who sparred at the nurse, demanded, in an unknown tongue, lacteal sustenance with the lungs of a young giant, growing alarmingly red in the face at the slightest provocation, and wrestled with his baby-linen like an infant Hercules strangling the serpents. He was a source of great quiet solace and contentment to his father, who took to enjoying his pipe and pint now at home, instead of at the "Kings and Key," watching this young shaver as he lay sprawling in his unclad innocence on the hearthrug. I call him a "shaver," for there can be no doubt that this one was destined also to be a carpenter. He was emphatically a planed, and chiselled, and well-morticed child, a thoroughly square boy, plumbable and ruleable. They called him Joe, of course. When he came to be about fourteen months old, it was perfectly clear that he would take after his erst-pugnacious father, rather than his meek and timid mother. This somewhat bewildered Bessy—

a fighting child was an anomaly in a serious life; but little Joe had her eyes, her smile; and I believe that, in her secret heart, the little woman was delighted at the boy's boldness.

Yes; it was about this time that Shrimpington began to be Haunted. Not by the unquiet spirits of those whose carved effigies lay in the old church, but by a living phantom. Nobody told Joe Rabbets about the ghost; but he saw its presence, shudderingly, ere long. No one word passed between him and his true wife on the subject. She had known the story of Loo Rabbets's shame long since.

Which miserable creature had the hardihood to come back to the town whose propriety she had outraged, and to the family she had disgraced. Not that there was any outward hardihood about poor Loo. She came back very weak and tottering, with pale cheeks, eyes darker and more lustrous than ever—but ah, so sad! Her noble friend had deserted her, somewhere abroad, leaving her almost penniless, and with a little girl, now about a year old. She had come back to her mother, to be very ill and penitent, to bear her cross, and try to rear her child in better paths than those she had trodden. No one could bear very hardly on this bruised reed. Some of the girls had made up their minds to jeer and flout her, some feminine noses were at first turned up when she went furtively about to purchase the articles—her mother was now very infirm—required for the house; but her white, woe-begone face and feeble gait disarmed the most pitiless. So they let her be. She worked her fingers to the bone, almost, at needlework, to support herself and the child, yet even then she could find time to put hems of marvellous embroidery to the little child's white garments. She kept it scrupulously neat, and tended it incessantly. The little worked petticoats and caps were the only remnants left of her old vanity. You know the sort of embroidery I mean. Ladies are always working it now upon long strips of linen, and it is based upon a sort of "pinking," of which the earliest specimens I ever saw were upon winding sheets. Squire Gervoise by this time was dead, and the Lady Maud gone to live at Florence upon her

jointure. Mr. Fisk, the young curate, who had known Loo in her sunshine, and had repeatedly warned and reproved her, came to see her often now. He said that she was truly penitent, and that he approved of this voluntary expiation in residing in the place where her pride and her shame were so well known. She kept mostly in the back parlour of the little sweetstuff shop, and she grew paler every day.

It was Christmasy weather, early in December, but late one afternoon, when Joe Rabbets, swinging his basket of tools in one of his stalwart hands, was walking from Daiseybridge Hill to Shrimpington. Joe had had a lift by the coach from St. Becketsbury; and this Kentish Giovanni had stayed away four whole days, the profligate! from his wedded wife. It may be pleaded, however, in Joe's defence, that he had been engaged on a job at the Reverend Canon Challis's, in the Dean's Yard, and being an old *employé* and humble friend of the reverend gentleman, had been favoured with board and lodging during his stay at the very canonical residence itself. The Reverend Canon Challis was a merry man, with a rich running voice, like preserved turtle soup that is being melted. He had a fancy for calling people by their Christian names, and an affected sternness in his manner—always contradicted a moment afterwards by that laugh of his—that made him a subject of great wonder and delight to the little boys whom he was always about to have punished by the schoolmaster, never keeping his promise to them. When he came into the kitchen on the day of Joe's arrival, and said to the cook, "Jane Stevens, you will take care that Joseph Rabbets has as much beef and as much beer as he wants; do you hear, woman? Mary Dollamore (biting her nails as usual, I see), your mistress will tell you where Joseph Rabbets's bed is to be made up; Scullery-maid, mind your work, girl," you would have thought that these were the words of an autocrat; but you would have speedily changed your opinion to hear the Reverned Canon Challis trot up the kitchen stairs, rattling his watch seals, and laughing heartily tc think what an ill-tempered fellow he was. He was a photographer, this jocund canon, a botanist, a sketcher of landscapes with a red-

hot poker on pieces of board, a correspondent of "Notes and Queries;" and Joe had plenty of work during the four days in the study, the operating room, and the workshop. The reverend Challis had a tribe of the noisiest children ever heard in the quiet precincts of a Dean's yard; and their mamma was a stout lady with a beaming countenance, who was an adept in the cultivation of peaches, and drank two glasses and a half of port wine every day after dinner. When Joe, having received his wages, left the house to return home, Mrs. Dean ran down stairs and confided to him, neatly pinned up in blue paper, such a present for Bessy, in the shape of a new cap, that Dollamore the housemaid had well-nigh choked with rage when she saw it on her mistress's dressing-table. "And you are to tell her, Joe," said Mrs. Dean, "that it isn't wicked to wear ribbons in her cap. Tell her not to mind that prosy Mr. O'Goggerdan, but to ask Mr. Fisk."

So Joe walked down into Shrimpington, his tool-basket in one hand, the precious cap in the other. He felt unusually cheerful and light-hearted; and as the wintry sun smiled out upon him through the skeleton boughs, he positively hummed a tune. There were relics in him of the old rollicking Joe of years long past.

It was seven in the evening when he got to the quiet, neat little cottage in Shire Lane; but let me, for the nonce, be swifter of foot than he, and precede him to the cosy little lodging-room and kitchen, where his demure wife sat waiting for her lord.

Everything very bright, everything in order, and in its place. Plenty of furniture, well bees'-waxed. Recess in flat—as the stage directions say—open, and with a very white bed glimmering in the obscurity, towards which Mrs. Rabbets, sitting on a low chair before the fire, cast from time to time anxious glances. For so quiet and equable a woman, she was this evening unwontedly agitated. She looked at the clock, she looked at the cat, she looked at the kettle; she fidgeted on the chair; she almost lost her temper with a muffin which she was toasting for her husband's tea, and which would persist in tumbling off the fork. Finally, she took refuge in Mr. O'Goggerdan against Bishops; but that quarrelsome divine seemed to have lost his

influence over her for once; and his abusive sentences chased each other over the page before Bessy's unheeding eyes.

Joe came in at last, very tired, but cheery. Bessy made his tea, and watched him enjoy it with great solicitude, but she was as fidgety as ever. I may as well state that the first act of this bold carpenter on entering his home—an act, by the way, which was an invariable custom of his—was to kiss his wife. I cannot sufficiently commend this kindly custom to the imitation and observance of all married couples. But in drawing her towards him to kiss her, Joe observed, in some surprise, that his wife's eyes were quite red and swollen.

"Why, Bess, my lass," he exclaimed, "you've been crying."

"N—n—no, Joseph," stammered Mrs. Rabbets; "I—I've been reading the gentleman's work by firelight, and you know how bad that is for the eyes, Joe."

"The gentleman's work," was the name by which the famous *opus* of O'Goggerdan *versus* Bishops was known in the Dawks-Rabbets family. Joe seemed but half satisfied with his wife's explanation, and catching up the muffin that had misbehaved itself, speedily put an end to the crimes of the thing by eating it. He would have been less satisfied had he known that the firelight story was one of the few fibs that Bessy had ever told in her life.

"But where," Joe asked—looking round when he had finished his meal, delivered the cup, recounted his four days' adventures with Mr. and Mrs. Dean, and lighted his pipe—"where's little Joe? Not gone to bed? Too early yet, surely, and his dad coming home and all."

"N-n-no, not gone to bed," answered Bessy, still stammering, and this time blushing in addition. "I lent him to Mrs. Rodrick's at the dairy for half an hour."

The practice of "lending" children of tender years for short periods, and for the inspection and admiration of female neighbours, was a very common one in Shrimpington; and as Joe was a very fine child, he was constantly in requisition. Joe the elder had no particular objection to this infantile loan-society principle,

and consoling himself with the remark that the young "shaver" would be home soon, went on smoking his pipe in silence. But he would have objected very strongly had he known that this child-lending story added another to the fibs which the mendacious Mrs. Rabbets was accumulating against herself.

"Joe," she said, suddenly.

"Well, Bess."

"Will you go up town and take a pint, dear? I want to be left alone awhile."

"Do you want to get rid of me, then?" asked Joe, half piqued and half good-humouredly. "It isn't washing-day."

"No, no, Joe," his little wife answered. "It isn't that; but I do want you away, dear. I've got a headache, and, and—I've got a woman coming to gossip. Let me be for half-an-hour, my man."

Now Mrs. Bessy Rabbets was not at all given to the affliction of headaches, and still less to the pestilent practice of gossiping. But in this well-ordered household the wife commanded, and was as well obeyed, in all things appertaining to her province, and never overstepping that province, as the husband. Both were sovereigns in their own territories, and this is why they lived so happily together. Joe concluded that his wife had some good reason to desire his absence, and accordingly gave her another kiss, and went forth into the night. The first thing his wife did when the door closed was to sit down, bury her face in her hands, and have what women call a "regular good cry." She seemed better after this, but no neighbour came to gossip, and she was more fidgety than ever, flitting in and out of the recess where the snowy bed was, like a restless little elfin.

Joe came back at the expiration of the half-hour quite white and haggard. It was his wife now who might have taxed him with having red eyes. He sat down by the fireside, silent, rocking to and fro. His wife's heart told her that he had heard the tidings—that he knew that Louisa was dead.

Yes, she had been permitted to depart. No more on earth were her tears to flow. Those eyes would never glisten again; those lips would never smile, those ears never listen to compli-

ments and flatteries, more. No more were her hands to deck her perishable clay with gewgaws; no more were her feet to patter nimbly through the avenues of Vanity Fair. She had been suffering for months under a slow and wasting disease, and now Heaven had released her.

Bessy came up and laid her hand upon her husband's shoulder. He turned and looked at her with eyes full of dolorous love and trust. He knew she had never been jealous of the dead woman.

"The Lord be merciful to her," said Bessy, sobbing.

"Amen," answered the carpenter.

"Poor girl, poor girl!" he went on after some little time, some little indulgence of natural grief. "A sorry end to come to, a sorry end, and a sad. She was hardly used, hardly used, Bess, and I loved her very dearly."

She was not jealous to hear him say it. She took his hand in hers, and kissed it.

"I thought you might have heard of it on your way up street, Joe," she said. "She went off as quiet and peaceable as a lamb at four o'clock. I was there, and—"

"I know you were," the carpenter cried out, "and bless you for it, Bess."

"I was there," the little woman continued, "and she kissed me only five minutes before she died. Mr. Fisk was there, and told her that she had made her peace with all—even with you, Joe, for you had forgiven her long since—and that she had all to hope and nought to fear. She bade me forgive her too! What had I to forgive her for, poor soul? She gave Mr. Fisk—I *do* like Mr. Fisk—a lock of her beautiful black hair for you; and I'll plait it into a chain, Joe, and you shall wear it round your neck with your silver watch from Prawnby's."

She tried to kiss away the tears that were coursing down the carpenter's cheeks.

"She'll be buried on Thursday," she went on. "I hope Raven—"

"Raven be——!" the carpenter cried, vehemently, but stopped, blushing. The old Adam was not quite gone out of

fighting Joe Rabbets, and in another moment there would have been an oath. "No mortal man," he continued more calmly, "shall make Loo Rabbets's coffin, or lay her in it, but her cousin Joe. I'll be at work at it at seven to-morrow morning. I know thou'lt see to the rest, Bess, for the poor old mother is half-blind, half-bedridden."

"Have you—have you seen her, Joe?" asked his wife, timidly. "Louisa."

"No," answered the carpenter, sadly. "I could not bear the sight to-night. Some of the neighbours will watch by the body, and mind the child, both helpless enough now, heaven knows!"

He was sitting with his little wife on his knee, smoothing her soft brown hair. He was a very giant to her; and never surely was a comelier parasite seen nestling round a sturdy oak.

"Bess, my girl," he continued, "'tis about that poor motherless little child that I want to talk to thee."

"Yes, Joe."

"We've been man and wife now," he said, "for three and twenty months, and not one bitter word has grown up between thee and me. The Great Giver of all good has bestowed on us a dear boy, a bond to draw us closer together, Bess, a gift for which I am very thankful."

He halted in his discourse, and looked musingly at the fire, asked if Mrs. Rodricks had brought little Joe back, hoped she would not be long, began again, stopped, and seemed altogether as fidgety as his wife had been an hour since.

"Bess," he broke out at last, "I want to ask thee a favour."

"Name it, dear."

"Why, look here, now," he proceeded, with painful deliberation. "Life isn't so hard with us. You keep house for me like a little queen. I've plenty of gear and shear"—he looked round with some pride on his abundant chattels; "thanks to you, I've always good meals for us all; good clothes to my back; always something in the savings-bank; and besides that I know, woman—for I've watched thee when thou least thought of it—that thou hast always a crust and a copper for the poor and needy."

"Heaven has been very good to us, Joe, and we are very comfortable."

"I'm earning, Bess, three-and-thirty shillings a week. In the new year, I shall be a two-pounder. Before long we shall be in business for ourselves. We have but three mouths to feed, and what would be a fourth, and such a little one too, Bess?"

She turned away her head, but laid it on her husband's shoulder.

"Oh, Bess, Bess!" he said, "think of that forlorn child in the house of death yonder. What is to become of her? What will she do? Will the villain who ruined and deserted her mother take care of her? Can poor old Granny Rabbets do aught for her? I tell thee, Bess, there's ne'er a Rabbets in Shrimpington save myself who will touch that child with the fingers' end, for the disgrace her mother has brought on the family. The child will have to go to the workhouse, Bess."

"The workhouse! Oh, anything rather than that."

"I tell thee they'll have to send her to the union," he continued; "unless—unless you'll be of my mind. What will be this poor little thing in cost to us? If Heaven gives us more children, He has given me health, and strength, and energy to work. Oh, my woman, my woman! let us think of Him who remembers the widow and fatherless, and bade them suffer little children to come unto Him. Let us bring the baby home and rear it for our own."

The wife had burst into passionate sobs, but answered never a word.

"You won't," said the carpenter, sadly. "You refuse to do this, Bessie!—— I know it was bold of me to ask you, my own dear love, after what has past long since; I know——"

"Oh! Joe, Joe," the woman cried out, casting herself at his feet before the winter fire—"*the child is there—there, Joe, in the bed!*"

She rather dragged than led her husband to the recess where I saw the glimmer of the snowy bed. With one trembling hand she held the light; with the other she turned down the coverlet,

and there were *two* little innocents, boy and girl, nestling and snuggling close to one another. And though those poor mortal parents could not see them, I think that angels' wings were fanning the children, and that it was a divine lullaby that made them smile in their sleep.

Bessie had brought the little lamb home, and laid it beside her own. So would you have done, dear Lady—to whom, albeit you know it not—I dedicate these Shadows. She knew her husband's generosity, she trusted in his kindness, but she had not dared, at first, to tell him of the adoption she had made.

O brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters, when we sit at church and hear the parson preach about God's mercy, think what a shining light and bright example that mercy should be to us! Think that we all—to the humblest of us—have it in our power to imitate, in our degree, the Divine Exemplar, even though it be at the distance of a universe, by being merciful to one another.

QUALK THE CIRCUMNAVIGATOR.

THE Royal Commission for improving the condition of the Fine Arts holds periodical sittings in the new palace at Westminster, under the presidency of that illustrious Prince, whose name, like that of the famous archer of nursery story, begins with an A; but I have not yet heard that Mr. Herbert or Mr. Dyce has been commissioned to paint a fresco for the Peers' robing-room, immortalising the exploits of Qualk. I have waited impatiently, since the termination of the discussion as to whether Cromwell was to have a statue or not, for an official notification that Mr. Bailey or Baron Marochetti was to erect forthwith a monument to Qualk. Nelson has his column in Trafalgar Square; poor dear Bellot his granite obelisk at Greenwich; Wellington and Peel are sown, in bronze and marble, broadcast over the kingdom; but where is the statue of Thomas Qualk? I am ready to subscribe to the Qualk testimonial; I am prepared to use my influence with the Governors of Christ's Hospital in order to procure a presentation for Qualk's youngest son. I am persuaded that the kind-hearted Duke of Cambridge has the name of Qualk's eldest born down at the Horse Guards for the very next commission, without purchase. Parliament, I am sure, need only be moved by the accomplished Chancellor of the Exchequer to vote as munificent a grant to Qualk's family as it did to that other benefactor of humanity who invented perforated postage stamps; yet I wait vainly for some symptom of national recognition of the transcendant services of Qualk, to rush down to the "Times" office, and insert an advertisement that the Qualk Committee (with power to add to their number) are now sitting;

that the Qualk subscription is opened: and that Messrs. Coutts at the West, and Messrs. Barclay and Bevan at the East end of London, have kindly consented to receive contributions.

There may be some persons obtuse enough to object that they do not know who Thomas Qualk was (for, alas! I must speak of him in the past tense), or what was the precise nature of the services which entitle him to the national gratitude. Be it my pleasing duty to enlighten those who are yet lost in the mazes of ignorance respecting the achievements of this great man; and to demonstrate conclusively the claims which the subject of this paper possesses on the sympathies of a British public. "When kings and ministers are forgotten, when the force and direction of personal"—but no, I need not quote Junius. I trust to show how much the late Qualk the Circumnavigator effected for the benefit of his countrymen, and with what an inadequate requital his efforts have hitherto met.

Thomas Qualk was born—really it is not the slightest good to tell you where my Thomas was born; suffice it to say, that he *was* born, and that he had the ordinary number of grandfathers and grandmothers, with whom marriage within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity was, according to the dictates of the Common Prayer-book, rigidly proscribed. He was educated, —but, dear me! what does it matter where a youth receives his primary rudiments of education? George Stephenson could not read or write at nineteen years of age; Gifford, of the "Quarterly Review," was a cobbler; Burns whistled at the plough; George Canning boasted that he could never do a sum in long division. I suppose—nay, I am certain—that Thomas Qualk must have been educated somewhere; nay, I feel a moral conviction that he was a good boy, stuck to his book, and was much beloved by his master. Great navigators must be good boys. Such, I am sure, were Jason, Marco Polo, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, Christopher Columbus, Sebastian Cabot, La Pérouse, Admiral Benbow, Americus Vespuccius, and Captain Cook.

I am ashamed to say that I am entirely ignorant of the time when the idea of going down to the sea in ships, and circum-

navigating the globe, first occurred to Thomas Qualk. I don't know at all when he first began to handle the astrolabe and the quadrant; to "take a sight"—otherwise called an observation—at high noon; to trouble himself about the altitude of the sun and moon; or to babble his first "nor'-nor'-west by east" upon the shipman's card. It must have been at a very early age, too, that he commenced hitching up his tarry trousers, shivering his timbers, dowsing his glims, and darning his old leescuppers; but, to tell the truth, I have no authentic documents on which to rely. I have had no access to letters bearing on the early life of Qualk. I met with him only in the meridian of prosperity and in the noontide of his fame; and, if you have no objection, I would much rather be excused from dwelling any further on the events of his early days—the subject being one about which I know as much as the Man in the Moon. *Mihi est,* however, to describe Qualk in after-life, and to trumpet forth to the world the great and good things he accomplished for the regeneration of his species, and the greater glory of circumnavigation. Actuated by this desire, I will, if you please, skip some intervening years of Thomas's career; imagine him breeched, launched in life, and on the salt sea waves; assume him to have overcome his first attack of sea-sickness; to have caught his first grampus; to have been rescued from his first shipwreck (for he must have been shipwrecked many times, must Thomas Qualk); and to have budded forth into the full bloom of a circumnavigator. Let me speak of the man as I knew him in the grand climacteric of his renown.

On the 8th of September, eighteen hundred and fifty, the good ship *Chokeabahdar*, teak built, copper bottomed, A 1 at Lloyd's, Brickboole commanding, and under engagement to the Honourable Company to sail on the ninth, was lying in the East India Dock. Bombay was the destination of the gallant *Chokeabahdar*. Her teak sides were already groaning with the weight of cargo to be despatched to the realms of burning Ind. Her copper bottom swelled with the weight of bales and packages addressed to the civil and military servants of the Honourable Company. You have seen those packages comfortably drying

outside the trunkmaker's shops at the West-end: dark slate-coloured, or oil-skin covered chests, with inscriptions in white paint on their lids, setting forth that they were the property of Chittagong Chillum, Esq., Bombay Civil Service, or Lieutenant Chutnee, 99th Native Infantry. The *Chokeabahdar* was nearly full, not to say choked, with merchandise. Goodness, and the supercargo, only knew how many cases of books, how many boxes full of military uniforms, how many Brinley-Richard fowling-pieces, bachelors' kettles, iron bedsteads, india-rubber goloshes, French bonnets, varnished boots, Sangster's parasols, Mechi's writing-desks, camera-obscuras, stocks of stationery, rolls of flannel, bottles of eau-de-Cologne, hat-boxes, trunks, portmanteaus, sea chests, bullock-valises, band-boxes, and cocked-hat cases, were stowed away in her spacious hold. She was as full of odds and ends as an old curiosity shop. Her 'tween decks were full, and her cabins were full. Her state-rooms, her cuddy, her berths, and her lockers were all full; and the only wonder was how ever, with all the vast mass of inanimate matter she had on board, she would find room for the hundred and ten passengers, male and female, who—leaving the crew out of the calculation altogether—were to sail in that good ship from Blackwall to Bombay.

For the *Chokeabahdar* carried not only goods, but passengers—ay, and passengers galore. Don't think that every lieutenant in a native regiment, whose furlough is out; don't think that every civilian, whose sick leave has expired, goes back to Hindostan by the speedy but expensive overland ronte. One hundred and twenty pounds sterling; this is a sum to be looked at twice ere you part with it; and there are many old Indians, even, who will tell you that they prefer the slow, comfortable, easy-going three months and a half passage round the Cape, to the hurry-scurrying, feverish, money-scattering hejira from London to Calais, from Calais to Marseilles, from Marseilles to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Suez, from Suez to Aden, and from Aden to Bombay. A month's incessant railway, steamer, omnibus across the desert, and steamer again, is all very well in its way; but to the placid and contented mind, there is a fund of contemplative

enjoyment in a long sea voyage. The ship that with flowing sail "spreads her white bosom to the gale," is to many a far sweeter location than the creaking, groaning, straining steam-vessel. You have time for all sorts of amusements in a long sea voyage. For experiencing all the multifarious phases of sea-sickness, from the premonitory nausea brought on at the first sight of boiled mutton (very adipose) and caper sauce, to the utter prostration of a five days' gale, when you feel that the service for which you would be most profoundly grateful would be that rendered by the first sailor who would take the trouble to throw you overboard. You have time for that most delightful of sensations, getting well after a severe attack of sea-sickness, and waking up some fine morning with an appetite fit for Fe-fo-fum, pleasurably sniffing the invigorating sea-breeze, finding your sea-legs, dressing for the poop, going to see the hammocks stowed, smoking a cheroot forward, discoursing with the boatswain on nautical matters, and positively taking an interest in the number of knots the ship makes per hour. You have time for flirtation, for gambling, for getting up private theatricals, for quarrelling with the occupant of the next state-room, and challenging him to mortal combat, if needs be; for conning the introductory pages of Hamilton Moore, and fancying that you are studying navigation; for writing a novel, or an epic poem, or sonnets on the sea-gulls, or taking a sketch of the equinoctial line, if your imagination be brilliant enough to enable you to see it. In short, there is scarcely anything but what you can do at sea—from playing at chess to bird-stuffing, from baiting fish hooks to solving mathematical problems, from inditing squibs against the unpopular passengers, to stirring up a mutiny against the captain.

The good ship *Chokeabahdar* had got her cargo in, and was ready to fulfil her engagements not only to the Honourable Company, but also to the ladies and gentlemen who had taken and paid for their passage to Bombay, at the office of the brokers, Messrs. Loot and Cowrie, of Great Saint Helen's. On this instant 8th, the environage of the *Chokeahahbar* was encumbered with passengers' luggage and personal effects, and the passengers them-

selves were pottering about the decks and cabins of the ship, driving the mates to the verge of desperation with irrelevant questions, getting into the way of sailors, opening all the lockers in the cuddy, grumbling about the accommodation of the state-rooms—though each had chosen one for himself on the printed plan in the agents' counting-house—superintending the lowering of those chests and trunks which were marked "not wanted on the voyage" into the hold, and complaining bitterly that sufficient care was not taken in saving the corners of the boxes from being knocked against the coombings of the hatchways. The first mate, Mr. Drybone, was highly exasperated against the passengers generally, and made several very uncomplimentary remarks concerning them to Mr. Tuffknot, the boatswain; and it was well for these rebellious ones that Captain Brickboole was not aboard, for a stern man was that commander, and one who stood no nonsense. If a passenger—were he gentle or simple—showed himself insubordinate to Captain Brickboole's sway during a voyage, him straightway did the determined shipmaster clap in irons. "I'd serve him so," Captain Brickboole was wont to say, "if he was a member of Council; that I would." But though severe, Captain Brickboole was a humane man, and tempered justice with courtesy. He had never been known to put a passenger in irons without apologising to him, on releasing him, in the frankest and most gentlemanly manner, and his fetters were always—with a tender regard to the wrists and ankles of his captives—covered with green baize.

There was quite an imposing list of passengers on the present occasion. Lieutenant-General Pancreas, Bombay army, going back after his two years' furlough, part of which he had spent at Pau, in the Pyrenees, and part at Cheltenham. Neither sanitary sojourn appeared to have done General Pancreas's *viscera* much good; or his complexion, or his temper either, to tell truth. He was an ill-conditioned old curmudgeon, who devoured prodigious quantities of curry, pepperpot, chillum, cutlets, capsicum-hash, and mulligatawny soup, took large quantities of abominably pungent Amsterdam snuff, wore a suit of nankeen throughtout the year (with woollen beneath it in winter, as Duke Arthur used to

wear flannel beneath his white ducks), which nankeen was nearly as yellow as his face, drank deep potations of sangaree, and grumbled incessantly.

He was the most important in rank among the passengers, and, at the cuddy banquets, sat on the right hand of Captain Brickboole. Next to him in social status was Mr. Poppyhead, Bengal Civil Service. He was collector at Muddlepore, and was a very harmless, languid, sleepy-headed gentleman, who never seemed so happy as when he was in a dressing jacket and slippers, his body semi-recumbent in one chair, and his feet in another, with his eyes closed, and a very long Trinchinopoly cheroot in his mouth. Mr. Poppyhead was reported in well-informed Anglo-Indian circles to be worth several lacs of rupees, but he always asserted that he was exceedingly poor, and gave out that he returned to India by the long sea route for economy's sake alone. Economy, too, had something to do with the choice made by Mr. McShard, M.R.C.S., and surgeon of the 91st B.N.I., who stoutly declared that his pay didn't keep him in surgical instruments. He also was a passenger per *Chokeabahdar*; and with him was Mrs. McShard—a species of Anglo-Bengal Helen McGregor, and the Misses McShard, two young ladies of middle age, and of such angular proportions, that they might have passed for Euclid's Elements in petticoats—who had been setting their ringlets for ever so many years at snug-salaried members of the Civil Service; but failing to create an excitement in the perhaps jaundiced bosoms of those covenanted servants of the Hon. Company, were now fain to exercise their blandishments upon Messrs. Griffin and Tiffin, raw-beef-faced lads of seventeen, who were making their first voyage to Hindostan as cadets, and were by their respective parents specially recommended to the care of Mr. McShard. Griffin was the son of Lieut.-Col. Griffin, H.E.I.C.S,[1] and sometime Political agent at Guzzleabad; and Tiffin was the nephew of the well-known and wealthy Biffin, the great opium merchant and East India Director: and neither were matches to be lightly

[1] This story was written before the sponging out of the Honourable East India Company, peace to its jaundiced manes.

regarded, as you may imagine. I really have little more space to describe the remaining passengers of the *Chakeabahdar*; yet I must sacrifice a line or two, in order that all may know that Mr. and Mrs. Kobbatt, the indigo planters of Bloorut, were among the list; that the charming Miss Roguey was there, going out to join her papa, Colonel Roguey, commanding the Pogueypore Contingent; that the gallant Captain Pyggesbycker, of the Shazaderugger Irregulars, had also joined the band, professedly because he abhored steam navigation; but, in reality, I am afraid, because he had lost rather heavily lately at the pleasing game of lansquenet, as carried on at the Hydrocephalus Club, in St. James's Street, and found round the Cape, in comparison to *viâ* Marseilles, a very considerable saving. And I should be guilty of a very great dereliction against the laws of gallantry, were I to omit the name of Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy, that estimable widow lady, of the rubicund countenance, the affable manners, the convivial habits, and the vast circumference of person, who was, and is still, I hope, known to all Anglo-Indians as the worthy principal of the Bundelpunt Institution for the education of young ladies, Calcutta. Honest Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy! no typhoons, monsoons, droughts, nor rainy seasons; not a thirty years' sojourn in the scorching East; not all the cares of a flourishing boarding-school, with its inevitable occasional *contretemps* of bankrupt scholars, whose parents had been mofussilising in an inordinate degree, had been able to diminish her appetite for substantial viands, or her thirst for Hodgson's pale ale, had taken one dimple from her jolly face, had popped one acrid curd, one drop of sour whey, into the milk of human kindness with which she abounded. Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy was the female Daniel Lambert of Bengal; but she was the best tempered woman, the heartiest feeder, and the most excellent schoolmistress, of the three presidencies.

The portentous morrow at length dawned on which the *Chokeabahdar* was to sail. There had been great leave-takings and farewell jollifications among the passengers. Some had dined on the eve of departure at the Artichoke, at Blackwall,

and had found the fare there so good, that they had been persuaded to occupy beds at that comfortable hostelry for the night. General Pancreas and Mr. Poppyhead had business to settle at the India House, and were to join the ship at Gravesend. Griffin and Tiffin came down in a Hansom cab from the Bath Hotel, in Piccadilly, where they had been stopping with Tiffin's uncle, Biffin. Mr. McShard, his wife, and daughters, had prudently saved the expense of a night's extra stay in London, and had slept on board the *Chokeabahdar*. The other passengers dropped down to Blackwall by various conveyances; Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy arriving by a Woolwich steamboat, the whole of whose passengers and crew—down to the very call-boy, she had delighted with her amenity and good temper during the short voyage. She consumed two pints of bottled stout between Essex Pier and Rotherhithe, and insisted on the Captain hobnobbing with her. It was with difficulty that the crew could be dissuaded from saluting her with three cheers when she landed. They characterised her by the name of "Brick." Captain Brickboole joined the gallant ship at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. He had had a large amount of business to get through on the foregoing evening; notably a dinner given him at the Ship and Turtle, in Leadenhall Street, of which he was good enough to say afterwards that the iced punch was first chop, but the turtle was poor stuff, after terrapin.

The *Chokeabahdar* was to sail at noon; and at twenty minutes past eleven there entered the dockyard a gentleman whose name was down in the passenger-list, whose berth was taken, whose passage was paid, and whose voluminous luggage, or rather merchandise—so many cases and packages were there that bore his name as "passenger to Point de Galle, Ceylon; with care"—had been duly stowed away in the hold three days before. This gentleman, on his arrival, carried only a small carpet-bag and a slim umbrella in a shiny case. He was not a very remarkable gentleman to look at: of middle age, cleanly shaven, slightly inclined to corpulence, with a clear blue eye, and placid smile about his mouth, whose somewhat full lips offered physiognomical

evidence that he was not altogether averse to the pleasures of the table, with a closely-cropped head of black hair, in which, beneath his travelling-cap, a thread of silver might here and there be discovered. He was clad in a neat travelling suit of gray plaid. This middle-aged individual might have been a medical gentleman, a commercial gentleman, a gentleman retired from business, a major in a marching regiment, or a Manchester warehouseman. He paid the cabman who brought him to the dockyard gates very liberally; and when he gave him an extra shilling to drink his health withal, advised him, in a friendly manner, to take a biscuit and cheese with his potations, whatever they might be! "Always take care of your digestion, my man," he said, cheerfully, on parting; "the coats of the stomach are *so* easily injured." The cabman touched his hat, and drove off, staring at his good humoured fare over his shoulder. But I am afraid that when the hour of refreshment arrived (and I should like to know what are the hours of refreshment of London cabmen), he substituted the fumes of bird's-eye tobacco, inhaled through the tube of a clay pipe, for the biscuit and cheese recommended to him by the cleanly-shaven gentleman in the travelling-cap.

The passenger per *Chokeabahdar* picked his way daintily through the crowded dockyard, as though he was accustomed to the ways of places of maritime resort; avoided, by singular good luck, falling into the basin, entangling his legs in a cable, and tripping himself up therewith, or running foul of a dock-porter laden with sacks. The second mate of the *Chokeabahdar*, who was standing at the gangway, seemed to recognise him as he approached, and touched his gold laced-cap with a kindly aspect, as he stepped on board.

"Good morning, Mr. Qualk," he said; "punctual, as usual, I see!"

"As punctual, my good friend Dedlights," responded the passenger addressed as Qualk—and, indeed, there is no use in disguising it, this was Thomas Qualk, the Circumnavigator, himself —"as when, four years since, I came on board the *Chokeabahdar* in the Hooghly. Neither of us have grown younger since then,

Mr. Dedlights." With which sententious, but sage remark, Thomas Qualk amicably pressed half-a-dozen of the best Havannah cigars into the mate's hand, and went down below into his state-room.

"Very well the old gent looks," Mr. Binnacle, third in command, remarked to Mr. Dedlights.

"Fresh as paint," his superior officer rejoined, approvingly testing the cigars by means of his organs of taste and smell. "Lively as a man-a-war's cat when the grog's spilt. I wonder what the old boy's going to India for this time. Real Cabans these, and no mistake. He gave me a hubble-bubble, with an amber mouthpiece, last time he joined the *Chokeabahdar*."

He was always giving away something to somebody, Thomas Qualk. There never was, surely, such a generous-hearted creature. He made presents (mostly administrative to creature comfort) to the passengers, the officers, the crew, down to the little cabin-boys who swabbed the decks. We have seen how liberal he was to the cabman. He was known all over the seafaring world: for, an assiduous traveller for years, he had twice accomplished the great feat of circumnavigating the globe; and this present Indian journey was understood to be but the preliminary to his third trip to the antipodes. The officers of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company knew him well. He was familiar with all the steamers on the Southampton, Spanish Main, and West India lines; the stewards of the Cunard and the Collins's American packets rivalled each other in showing him attention; and the captains of the Australian emigrant ships (the "Black Ball" and "Red Jacket" fleets of antipodean clippers did not exist as yet) knew and respected him. The landlord of the Victoria Hotel, at Cape Town, swore by him; at Port Royal, Jamaica, he had four invitations to dinner every day he remained in harbour: the black waiters at the St. Boblink, Astor House, New York, grinned with delight when he ascended the marble steps of that establishment; and it was even whispered that at the wrecking, filibustering, semi-piratical haven of Key West, Thomas Qualk enjoyed an enviable popularity. Old acquaintances used

to joke him about Cape Horn and Terra del Fuego, and accuse him of being on familiar terms with the fair Patagonians : but this Thomas always denied, acknowledging, however, to having once experienced a tender feeling for an olive-skinned damsel residing in the island of Otaheite. And yet no one knew the motive of Thomas Qualk's continual journeyings to and fro over the seas. When questioned on the subject, he turned off inquiry with a laugh, stating that he travelled for the same reason as that assigned by Ben Jonson for drinking so much Canary sack—*i.e.* "because he liked it;" but he never grew angry; and when hard pressed, nodded his head with sly mystery, and said that the world would know all about it some day. Whence it became bruited about, that Qualk the Circumnavigator, emulous of the fame of Malte Brun, was about to edit another atlas; or was determined to rival Mercator by the production of another chart, which should throw that hitherto celebrated geographical projection into the shade. One thing, however, seemed certain, that Thomas must be very rich : for, beyond the money which his incessant voyages necessarily cost, he was most lavish in his personal expenditure. Had he travelled under French colours or among Frenchmen, little curiosity would have been excited concerning his movements and character. The easily satisfied sons of Gaul would have put him down at once as an eccentric child of Albion, a milord, afflicted with the "spleen" and temporarily tired of "bouledogues," raw beef-steaks, brandy-grog, and the "boxe," and spending his vast revenues in a pertinacious pursuit of marine adventures.

"'Twas post meridan, half-past four"—to borrow the exordium of Tom Dibbin's charming song, when, next day, the *Chokeabahdar* was tugged out of the East India Dock, and bidding a long farewell—not to "Nancy," but to the Isle of Dogs—floated majestically down the broad river. Cheers rang out around her as she threaded her way through the dense forest of shipping. Thousands of good wishes went after her; as after many and many as good and as brave a ship which has left Old England's shores under auspices as favourable, but which, alas!

has come to grief—burnt, perchance, to the water's edge, in the midst of a silent sky and a silent ocean, illumined for miles round by the red glare of her destruction; or dashed to pieces in a howling storm, by impetuous waves, or swallowed up alive by the inexorable deep: the secret of its dreadful end never to be known till the sea gives up its dead.

No such terrible catastrophe was to befall, this voyage at least, the *Chokeabahdar;* but still she had anything but a prosperous time. All went well until she had passed the Cape; but then ill luck seemed to set in upon her. She experienced a succession of violent gales; her hencoops were washed overboard; her sheep and pigs were drowned; her solitary cow refused to give any more milk, and shortly afterwards gave up, not only the dairy-line business, but the ghost altogether. The carpenter was not at all easy in his mind about the timbers of the *Chokeabahdar,* and reported her leaky; the boatswain had misgivings; the second mate looked dark and ominous; and even Captain Brickboole lost his wonted gaiety; forbore to make his wonted jokes at the cuddy table, and became moody and taciturn. All went wrong on board the gallant Indiaman. The crew grumbled and worked unwillingly; the passengers, tired out with the length of the voyage, and the violence of the weather, grew testy and ill-tempered, and quarrelled with one another vengefully. To bring things to the worst, when the *Chokeabahdar* had been four months at sea, and when the stock of sea luxuries had long been exhausted, it began to be noised about that the ordinary ship's provisions were running low, and that soon not only would there be no more soft bread and fresh beef, but there would also be a deficiency of salt-junk, biscuit, and rum.

It was under these untoward circumstances that Thomas Qualk, the Circumnavigator, shone forth in all the brightness of his exceptionally effulgent character. As the stock of provisions grew low, so did Thomas's spirits rise; and on the very day when the captain expressed his heartfelt sorrow in being compelled to put the cuddy passengers upon half rations, Thomas Qualk announced his intention of breaking bulk among the cases and

packages in the hold bearing his address; and among which he hinted, with a placid smile, "some odds and ends might turn up, which would come handy, by way of a relish, to the general short commons." Handy! odds and ends, indeed: the cuddy of the *Chokeabahdar*, which had a few days since presented only a beggarly account of empty soup tureens, became suddenly metamorphosed into a land of milk and honey—of milk and honey literally as well as figuratively—for, from the magical cases and packages of Thomas Qualk were dispensed lacteal streams, innocent of the presence of the "cow with the iron tail," and mellifluous treasures of the genuine Narbonne flavour. These were the very least of Thomas Qualk's odds and ends. He seemed to have entered into a solemn league and covenant with the cook of the *Chokeabahdar;* and day after day the table groaned—rejoiced would be, perhaps, the more appropriate word—with delicacies which could not be termed of the season, for they were clearly out of season, but delicacies which were of all seasons, magnificent, luxurious, and succulent. Only imagine always hungry Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy, imagine Griffin and Tiffin, imagine General Pancreas, imagine the great body of passengers, deprived for weeks of the luxuries, and almost of the necessaries of life, and now suddenly regaled with salmon cutlets, turtle soup, stewed kidneys, minced veal, Strasburg pâté, red mullet, jugged hare, lobster salad, Welsh mutton, hashed venison, green peas, asparagus, sea-kale, gooseberry tart, calf's foot jelly, and ice creams. And these formed but a tithe of the good things which the beneficent Qualk dispensed to all and sundry. He produced bins of wine rich and rare—Champagne, Sillery, Lafitte, Pommard, Clos-Vougeot, and Saint Pérray *mousseux*. From quaintly-formed flasks he poured forth captivating liquors, that flowed in oleaginous gurgles, sparkled like gems, and tasted of Paradise: Curacoa, Maraschino, Chartreuse, Noyau, and Parfait Amour. In hospitable raillery, he asked his guests if they would like a course of game. As jokingly they answered that they should, wishing, internally, very much that they might get it. The next day, the dinner's bill of fare included ortolans, beccaficos, quails,

grouse, woodcocks, partridges *rôtis en papillotte*, and pheasants which were brought to table with their tails on. The cuddy breakfasts became henceforth as sumptuous as the dinners. Meat teas became prevalent too, as also judicious little hot suppers, at which smoking tit-bits were served up, and incandescent drinks, that smelt of spices, cunningly compounded by the inexhaustible Qualk by way of night-caps. Inexhaustible by no means is an exaggerated epithet, for, as if to surpass all his former efforts, the indomitable benefactor took to providing every lady passenger, at breakfast time, with a bouquet of fresh roses, that were redolent of delicious perfume and prairie dew, and providing on the side-board a miniature Eau-de-Cologne fountain, for his fair fellow-travellers to dip their pocket-handkerchiefs in.

Nor did his generosity stop here. He sent great bowls of savoury soup forward to the crew, and on Sunday delighted the whole forecastle by the gift of a mighty plum-pudding. They had not tasted "duff" for thirty-one days, and Thomas Qualk was cheered the next time he appeared on the poop. The most wonderful and contradictory rumours began to spread about the culinary Mæcenas. He was a lord, an earl, a royal duke, the Governor-General of India. The ship belonged to him. Captain Brickboole dared not say that black was the white of his eye. The whole cargo of the *Chokeabahdar* was composed of victuals and drink. Why should they have been kept so long on half-rations and three-water grog? And then they began to grumble.

To grumble with some little show of reason, inasmuch as, with all the high living on board, the *Chokeabahdar* made no way. She had been out one hundred and fifty days, and still she tossed about, a crippled, creaking tub, far, far away from her destination. Would she ever see India's burning shores? The winds and waves seemed to have a spite against her, buffetting and hustling her about the infirm highway, till her overstrained timbers shrieked with agony, and her tallest masts crouched like hounds that are beaten. The carpenter, always inclined to croak, became doubly boding about that leak which had for months

weighed heavy on his mind; and suggested that well-thrummed sails should be put under the ship's keel. The boatswain, a crusty customer at the best of times, became a perfect bear, growling rather than whistling his commands to his satellites; the mates whispered grim disparagements of things in general among themselves; and Captain Brickboole, from a rigid, but just and temperate commander, transformed himself into a nautical Nero, teasing his mates, bullying his men, biting (metaphorically) his passengers' noses off, and making his apprentices wish that they had never been born.

Gradually, and curiously enough, an inexplicable revulsion of feeling began to set in against Qualk. His fellow-passengers looked askance at him. Even the benignant Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy frowned upon him while she devoured his dainties; and the Misses McShard turned up their already sufficiently turned up noses still further when he passed them on the poop. Among the crew, superstitious terrors began to be mingled with dislike of the inoffending circumnavigator. Grim and unearthly accusations were laid at his door, by a nautical *Vehmgericht* that met round the galley-fires or in the bunks of the forecastle. He was a wizard, a sorcerer, one of Mother Carey's chickens, Davy Jones, nay, the terrible Flying Dutchman himself. One discontented spirit suggested that he was a spy. A spy over what? The whales? The officers tried to stem the tide of Thomas Qualk's unpopularity, as loud and as far as they could; but even they were compelled to acknowledge that he was a "curious customer," and reminded each other of the bad weather they had experienced, four years previously, when Thomas had been a passenger on board the *Chokeabahdar*. Captain Brickboole had nothing to say against Mr. Qualk, certainly—how should he, indeed? nobody had anything to say against him; yet still he chafed and fretted at Qualk's tacit superiority to the disagreeable position of affairs, and said that he did not like Mr. Qualk's way of carrying on, and wanted very much to know whether he, Captain Brickboole, was captain of his own ship or not? Who else could be captain? Not Thomas Qualk, certainly. In short, the

hero of this brief biographical sketch became a very Jonah to the crew of the *Chokeabahdar;* and if it had not so providentially happened that, after a passage of almost unexampled danger and duration, the good ship arrived safely at her journey's end, it is more than probable that Thomas Qualk might have been thrown into the Indian Ocean, by a crew blinded by ignorance, prejudice, and superstition, to take his chance of being spitted on a coral reef, or swallowed by the first big fish that happened to pass that way. But Thomas escaped the fate of Jonah, to receive an ovation at Bombay, where he landed. The wrath of the passengers and seamen against him changed—such is the inconsistency of human nature—into affectionate and admiring penitence; a deputation aft, and a deputation forward, entreated his forgiveness. And when he descended the ship's side into the boat that was to convey him to the shore, three such ringing cheers echoed along the decks of the *Chokeabahdar*, as had not been heard since the arrival of the Governor at the Presidency. Captain Brickboole nearly wrung his hand off as he left the gangway, so forcible was the fervour of his parting salutation; and he remarked afterwards, in confidence to Mr. Dedlights, that if ever there existed a man from Limebouse to Labuan who "had no nonsense about him, that man was Thomas Qualk!"

The circumnavigator did not remain long at Bombay. He left in a country ship for Singapore, whence he dropped in at Hong-kong. Thence he departed in an American clipper for Australia, looking in at Honolulu in his way, and at Port Philip took shipping again for England, arriving in Falmouth Roads some time during the year eighteen hundred and fifty-two. All his fellow-passengers, all the captains, and all the crews with whom he sailed, had but one story to tell of him—the narrative of his unbounded liberality, of his apparently inexhaustible stock of land-faring and sea-faring delicacies. He had quelled a mutiny of Chinese emigrants, between China and Australia, by the distribution of rations of curried rice; he had tranquillised four hundred and twenty discontented Kroomen by an impromptu banquet of baked sucking-pig. Everywhere, always, he had been

the same: a perpetual fount of good things to eat and drink—an inexhaustible milch cow.

In the spring of eighteen hundred and fifty-three, Thomas Qualk once more left England, and with more packing-cases that ever. He sailed from the port of Grimsby, in a whaler called the *Young Porpoise*, Captain Lamplugh. Once more was Thomas bound on a voyage of circumnavigation, proposing to select the Russian possessions in North America as his starting point; but from the twenty-second of April, eighteen hundred and fifty-three, to the first of August, eighteen hundred and fifty-four, not a line reached the relatives of the crew of the *Young Porpoise* at Grimsby, not a soul could tell what had become of her, her equipage, or the adventurous circumnavigator who was her sole passenger. Anxiety quickened into alarm, alarm into terror, terror into a firm persuasion that the *Young Porpoise* would never come back.

At length the captain of a Hull whaler which came home "clean," which is more, says Smellfungus, "than I ever saw a Hull whaler go out," was enabled to solve this dreadful mystery. The narrative, on oath, was given before the mayor of Hull, and several influential gentlemen connected with the county and borough magistracy, and the corporation of the town. It was published at length in the "Hull Packet," and was *not* published in the "Hull Courier," which (the "Courier" being at the time in opposition to the municipality) is an additional confirmation of the authenticity of the statement. Several credible witnesses, frequenting the coffee-room of the Victoria Hotel, heard on various occasions the narrative in question from Captain Sealyskin's (of the *Blubberous*) own mouth; and the original document was itself preserved among the municipal archives at the Town Hall, where it remains to this day, to witness if I lie.

It appears that Captain Sealyskin's vessel, the *Blubberous*, having been in the course of the previous winter securely locked in the ice in a certain bight or inlet on the coast of Greenland, the captain with a few of his men, to beguile the monotony of their arctic captivity, started on an expedition to shoot walruses.

That, behind a range of gigantic icebergs, they had come upon a sailing vessel, bearing on her stern the fatal inscription, "*Young Porpoise*, Grimsby." The *Young Porpoise* had also been locked in the ice, but, alas! no genial thaw had relieved her from her stern imprisonment, and to all appearances she had been frozen up for months. The captain and his men boarded the vessel; but though they found about half her complement of hands on board, all those hands, alas! were locked in the icy clutch of death. Nothing but a row of frozen corpses, preserved in an unnatural state of freshness, met the frightened gaze of the fur-clad seamen of the *Blubberous*. Stay! there was a stranger spectacle. The deck was strewn with empty packages, empty cases, empty cannisters, empty sardine tins, empty pie-dishes, empty jam-pots, and empty champagne-bottles. But no vestige of anything, solid or liquid, that was fit for human sustenance, could they find on board. Descending to the captain's cabin, they found the frozen body of a bushy-whiskered man in a pilot jacket, stretched on one of the lockers, and whom they conjectured to be Captain Lamplugh, of the *Young Porpoise*. On the table lay the log-book, with the last entry made in it by its commander: "Provisions and water all gone. Exploring party in search of aid or walruses, away seventeen days. Temperature ninety-nine below zero. Mr. Qualk taken ill this morning. . . ." Fired at seeing the mention of that honoured name, though still shuddering at the sad sight they had witnessed, the seamen of the *Blubberous* rushed into the adjacent cabin, and there, peacefully reclining in an arm-chair, a well-covered sheet of manuscript on the table before him, a pen yet adhering to his stiffened fingers, they found, frozen to death, the form of him who once had been Thomas Qualk.

These were the last words of Thomas Qualk, found inscribed in legible characters on the scroll to which I have alluded:—

"Ship *Young Porpoise*, in the ice, January, 14, 1854.

"I am dying, dying of cold and starvation; but before I die I wish this statement to be made, that it may go forth in vindication of my character and in furtherance of the objects to which

I have sacrificed my time, my talents, and, at last, my life. I wish it to be known to the uttermost corners of the earth that *the patent preserved provisions—meat, vegetables, fruit, pastry, &c.*, —of Messrs. Hodgson, Podgson, and Dodgson, of Bucklersbury London, for whose respectable firm I have been for years the chief commercial traveller, are capable (in hermetically-sealed tins) of resisting the effects of any climate; and that they have so resisted the action of the extremes of torrid and gelid temperature. The subjoined testimonials, signed by very many commanders and officers of her Majesty's and the merchant service, and by hundreds of persons of rank and respectability with whom I have had the honour of travelling, will abundantly and additionally testify to the merits of the patent preserved provisions (in hermetically-sealed tins) of Messrs. Hodgson, Podgson, and Dodgson. *Dulce et decorum est pro—*"

But here the manuscript broke off.

Let us honour and revere the memory of Thomas Qualk, even as we do that of the unknown benefactors of humanity who invented red-herrings and pickled salmon.

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POOR ROBIN REDBREAST.

A STORY TO BE TAKEN WITH A GRAIN OF SALT.

Which grain of salt, I beg to observe, is, under no circumstances, to be placed on Robin Redbreast's tail, with a view to his capture. I should like to see anybody attempting such a liberty with my "household bird with the red stomacher."

I want to know, quite deserting ornithology, as you shall see, if there exists any invention, any delicate and elaborate device, any running tapestried warp or woof, any marvel of patient human handiwork, from the Peacock Throne at Delhi to St. Cuthbert's missal in the British Museum, that can equal in beauty and delight, and in a thousand joys, that wondrous amalgam, a Pretty Girl! What a glorious mystery she is, what a concentric puzzle, what a competition-defying, rival-maddening, first-rate article! And mind—I don't require any answer to my question, now that I have posed it. I will quarrel with any man, and say cutting things to any lady, who answers it; for I have already registered a triumphant reply in the negative. Don't tell me! Take away your Nasmyth's steam-hammers and Wyon's die-sinking machines; take away your Jacquard looms and Trotman's anchors; take them to the dockyards and factories. They are ingenious inventions; and you may patent them, and go to law about the infringement of the patents, till you are eaten up with equity. The pretty girl is to me the perfection of mechanism; all nature's resources heightened and developed by all the skill of art; the only successful instance on record of painting the lily and gilding refined gold. Take her, full front and back hair, sideways, lengthways, vertically, horizontally, she is a thing of beauty

and a joy for ever. From the topmost plume of her absurd yet ravishing little bonnet, to the tiny pegs in the heels of her Balmoral boots, she is a never-ceasing exhibition of prettiness. Take her eyes, my dear sir; take her nose; take the exquisite mole on her left cheek; take her cheeks, glowing with youth, and health, and innocence; take her arched eyebrows—those bridges over the cascade of her glances; take her glossy, wavy, or braided or ringleted hair (I had a friend who kissed a pretty girl's ringlet one day as she sat writing, of course utterly unconscious of what was going on, till he all but swallowed it); take the rosy tips of her ear-lobes, pendulous with the ear-rings which I am delighted to see have come into fashion again; take her lips, that mockingly pout, or roguishly smile; take her tiny gloved hand, which absurdly grasps a *porte monnaie* for "safety"—why, General Thumb might wrench that baby hand open; take her slim foot, covered with the shiny or the bronzed leather, with (ah! me) the varnished tip—facile as the descent of Avernus is the downward career of the double line of brass eyelet-holes. The pretty girls have taken to wearing red stockings—I can't stand it. Take her little waist; take her flowing drapery (I declare that I don't care if she wear nine hundred and ninty-nine skirts); take the fluttering little pennons of lace and ribbons, the shining little armoury of jewellery and nicknacks that environ her, the empyrean of perfume that surrounds her, the halo of beauty that beams round her face. "Take, O take, those lips away." "Hide, O hide, those hills of snow." Take *me* away, somebody. Lock me up, tie me up, hold me down, muzzle me, gag me, put on me goggles or blinkers; blind me with red hot copper basins, like Robert Curthose. Why are these Pretty Girls permitted to go about the world to district respectable fogies?

Little Zillah was the prettiest girl—the very prettiest girl—in Shrimpington. There had been a Beauty in the town once who came to grief; but little Zillah wore the palm now. She was so pretty that the wonder is that she was not kissed quite away by her friends and relatives, for to see Zillah, if you were

on a familiar footing in the house, was to kiss her. She was obliged to state gravely, when she had attained the mature age of thirteen, that she was no longer a child, and that she objected to being kissed in future by any one save her mamma and her "pappy." This was Doctor Quinnington, her papa. She was so pretty that people used to stop her in the street and tell her how pretty she was, quite disinterestedly. She couldn't be angry. She could only blush, laugh, and trip home. They used to send her out with the most hideous old housekeeper that eyes ever beheld; and even then bold men would murmur to one another, as she passed, "By Jove, what a pretty girl!" The young lord of the manor, Alured Ibbetson Gervoise, raved about little Zillah. He wanted to fetch Mr. Thorburn down from London to execute her miniature. He threatened with condign punishment any photographer who should dare to make little Zillah look ten years older on paper by the collodion process. He didn't make love to her, because he was engaged to Miss Moydore, the banker's daughter; but he saluted her with a respectful and winning courtesy that made little Zillah crimson and tremble with pleasure whenever she met him, and he sent her bouquets from the conservatories at the Priory, and hoped to have the pleasure of seeing her there when he brought his bride home, like a gallant young English gentleman as he was. Old Captain Mumps, formerly of the Bengal Army, now of Chittagong Cottage, near Scaleywort, who had never been known to be civil to soul that breathed, told Doctor Quinnington, when he consulted him for the fiftieth time about that tiresome old liver of his, that he thought he might be cured, if he were allowed to look at Miss Zillah for half-an-hour every day for a fortnight. This was taken as a great compliment, coming from Captain Mumps, the bilious and surly. If little Zillah had been a little duchess instead of a country doctor's daughter, she could not have received a wider or more devoted homage at the hands of the town's-people. To be sure, she was always tripping into poor people's cottages with medicines and comforts, and warm clothing and good books; to be sure, she was always scampering over the country-side on her

little gray pony, with her black retriever "Brio" flouncing after her, and with a cheery good-morrow to all the hat-touching and curtseying folk she met; to be sure, she was as a little fairy about her father's house, singing and dancing, and romping and hugging him; but she could be serious and devout enough at fitting seasons. You see, that an atmosphere of purity and goodness embosomed her, and challenged the love and respect of all. You see that to be so loved and respected, is to possess as safe a passport as that Irish young lady's, whose "kindly smile," we are assured by Mr. Thomas Moore, "lighted her safely through the green isle."

Zillah was not so very little, either. Not tall, she had as many inches as a pretty girl could reasonably desire; but "little Zillah" she had been called ever since childhood, and little Zillah she remained. I conscientiously believe that her only enemy on earth was a parrot belonging to Onderdonck, the retired master mariner from Rotterdam—what did he want settling at Shrimpington?—a most depraved bird, purchased in Ratcliff Highway, London, at an enhanced price, owing to his proficiency in bad language—who, whenever Doctor Quinnington's pretty daughter passed, shrieked out "Zillar, ZILLAR! Go to bed, Zillah! Fie for shame, Zillah!" and other injurious phrases. There were many conspiracies to wring that parrot's neck; but Dirck van Onderdonck was a dangerous man, and he told Doctor Quinnington's boy, who carried out the medicines, one day, that if he caught any one—man, woman, or child—near the cage of "Stoffius," his parrot, he would "bide dere ards oud." And nobody cared to have his or her heart bitten out by the terrible Dutchman.

It was a glittering day in January—a frosty, rimy day—when Nature, putting on a full *parure* of icicles, laughed Messrs. Hunt and Roskell, to say nothing of Mr. Hancock, temporarily to scorn, and little Zillah stood before her toilet-glass, occupied—shall the truth be told?—in "doing up her back hair." Such back hair as it was, too! such front hair! such an avalanche of golden curls! These curls cast purple shadows; they were

never confined by a night-cap, but wantoned over the pillow luxuriantly; no frizzling tongs had ever been heard of in their vicinity; and their young possessor had a way of flinging them at you, so to speak, tossing them on one side with mischievous grace as she was teasing you, and manœvuring them in a generally delirium-producing manner. There were few scents and no cosmetics on little Zillah's dressing-table. A great bunch of lavender over the looking-glass, on the chest of drawers her Bible, the "Arabian Nights," "Shakspeare," "Pickwick," "Lalla Rookh," and "Napoleon's Book of Fate"—Zillah was one little wee bit superstitious, though she laughed when she told her fortune by her dreams in the morning—a big *Hortus siccus*, full of flowers and plants, flattened or dissected, and a mysterious volume of vellum leaves, in which were inserted barbed hooks, and a quantity of weird, barbaric, gorgeous little figments made of silk, and many coloured feathers, and gold and silver thread. I am sorry to impute anything like a tendency towards masculine amusements to my little Zillah, but justice compels me to admit that she was, from the Thames to the Tweed, almost unrivalled in the manufacture of salmon flies. I think it exceedingly probable that she never saw a live salmon, little Zillah; but fly-making is an art whose mastery is innate, like poetry, colouring cutty pipes, and playing the fiddle. Zillah was renowned in the angling world for her flies, and kept her uncle James, who was a supervisor at Musselburgh, N.B., and an enthusiastic salmon-fisher, constantly supplied.

Little Zillah's bed, with the white dimity curtains—But goodness gracious, sir, what business have you in a young lady's sleeping apartment? I say that those white dimity curtains, which had rose-coloured bows—Go down stairs directly, sir. I won't go; though learned, chatty, simple-minded Doctor Quinnington is waiting breakfast for me, and for you too, Zillah, till I have satisfied myself of the truth of what I had already conjectured—that Zillah is not coming down in her plain morning-wrapper, but that she has put on one of her best frocks. She always would call them frocks: never "gowns," nor "dresses."

Yes; and on her young breast — that heaves as yet, thank Heaven, with no one bitter emotion—she wears a brooch set in gold with the Colosseum at Rome done in mosaic in its frame; and round her neck she wears a slender chain, whose ultimate goal, near her kind heart, is a locket, with a daguerrotype portrait of a thoughtful young man with spectacles. Aha! Little Zillah has not thus spruced herself up for nothing! But you need be under no apprehensions, form no rash conclusions, build no castles in the air. Little Zillah has been engaged for two whole years to Septimus Keene, who has been walking the London hospitals, and has come down for a few weeks' shooting over the Priory preserves. "Shoot every pheasant in the place, if you like, my dear doctor," wrote Mr. Gervoise; "and give the tails to Miss Zillah, to make flies of." But that was only his politeness. The young squire could not mean that, you know—being a great sportsman. Zillah was very fond of Septimus, though he was very short-sighted, and slightly sentimental, and very absent in mind. She called him her "goosey." In another year Septimus—who never did much execution among the pheasants, but liked the sport because it brought him near to Zillah—in another year Septimus would pass, and then he would settle at Shrimpington, and be married: perhaps become medical-officer to the Boo Union. Old Lieutenant Keene of the coast-guard, Septimus's father, had his station in convenient proximity at Cockleham Bay, some ten miles distance on the coast, south. A very limited horizon was this for little Zillah; but it was a horizon all of gold.

It is really very absurd; it is positively ludicrous! I can't expect you to believe such an out-of-the-way, such a preposterous thing; but I tell you the story as it was told to me, and I warned you in the outset that you must take it *cum grano salis*, with a grain of salt. Just as little Zillah was turning to quit the room, she heard a feeble, furtive little tapping at the glass of the casement. She opened it, pushed aside the screen of frosted evergreens that half veiled the window, and looked out. She could see nothing at first to account for the tapping, till her eyes

travelled to the sill, and there was a poor little Robin Redbreast, his scarlet waistcoat looking very dingy in the brilliant snow, his head drooping, his body supported on only one leg, and looking altogether like a Robin Redbreast in very serious difficulties. It must be premised that little Zillah was a fast friend and firm ally of all birds, and especially robins; and when the wintry weather came, there were always crumbs strewed upon that casement-sill. She thought that she recognised this particular robin as a somewhat humorous gentleman, who, after he had had his breakfast, was in the habit of staring quite impudently through the window, watching her while she laced her stays. Or perhaps he was that haughty robin of the dainty turn, who turned up his beak at brown bread, and came last Tuesday. Be it as it may, this robin seemed neither humorous nor hungry now. His feathers were all ruffled, and a little channel of crystallised salt shone on that space between his beak and his neck, which, by a stretch of literary license, I presume I may call his cheek, on either side. He was more than lame, and more than sick. Poor Robin Redbreast had broken his leg.

Some say that he had only got a prickle from a thorn between his claws, which little Zillah extracted. Others, that the injury was only a sprain, and that Zillah bathed it in warm water. Others, that it was his thigh that was lacerated, and that Zillah bound it up with a linen-rag. But I adhere to the Legend of the Leg; and I tell you, although I don't for one moment expect you to believe me, that Zillah not only put hot water and linen-rag in requisition, but that she set the fractured limb and fortified it with splinters, either through an intuitive knowledge of the clinical art, or through some sly study of the big books in her father's library. I have *some* conscience about me; or I would tell you that little Zillah put Robin Redbreast to bed, and tended him through the fever that ensued upon his accident.

I really think I had better leave off. I am sorry I began this story. It is too absurd. But then *I* am not responsible for it. I didn't invent it. The Shrimpington people are prepared

to take affidavits as to its truth, and I have heard it from the most respectable authorities.

I suppose you won't break out into a sneer of incredulity when I tell you that twelve months after the apparition of Robin Redbreast with his broken leg—he did not put in an appearance during the year, and my pet ascribed his absence to the ingratitude of bird-kind, inconstant volatiles, all "warble, flutter, and fly-away"—Zillah Quinnington became Zillah Keene. Her affianced one had passed with entire satisfaction to himself and his superiors. He had won prizes, too, during the year, and brought home a store of morocco-bound volumes, full of a hash of cloudy English and musty Latin, and all about medicine; emblazoned with gorgeous coats of arms in gold upon the covers. He had won fame, too—positively fame; and had rendered signal service in an emergency at the hospital to which he was attached, in the case of an inebriated Lascar crossing-sweeper, who had jammed one of his legs between the bars of an area-grating. Squire Gervoise had presented Mr. Keene with a case of surgical instruments, splendidly mounted in silver and mother-o'-pearl; and had promised to use his best influence with the guardians of the Boo Union, whenever there was a vacancy for a medical officer. A neat little house had been taken for the young couple—one of the new houses that Squire Gervoise had built, Scaleywort way; and Doctor Quinnington had insisted on presenting them with the immense phrenological head which was wont to stand on a pedestal in his own study. The old man was glad they would live near him. He would have broken his heart if his darling had gone quite away.

It was her bridal morning; in the winter; ay, and Zillah stood for the last time in her little chamber. Good-bye, little white bed with the dimity curtains tied up with rosy bows! I may glance at you now. Never more shall you be pressed by that fair and pure young form! Good-bye, casement shaded with evergreens! Good-bye!—Why, what was that? As I live, another tapping at the window-pane!

I am bold in my asseveration this time; for Miss Pipps, the senior bridesmaid, heard it as well as Zillah. Miss Pipps came of a highly respectable family. Her father was a guardian. Her mother was a Chicksand (of Bedfordshire). Surely Miss Pipps is worthy of credence. Zillah flew to the casement: her heart beat all pit-a-pat, for she seemed to recognise the tapping as familiar. She looked upon the sill, and lo and behold! *there was poor Robin Redbreast.* But he was no longer the disconsolate bird of twelve months since. He had grown stout. His beadlike eye twinkled. His waistcoat was like that of a beadle, minus the gold lace; and he had a confident chirrup. He had come to pass the time of the day, and to pay the compliments of the season; and he was not alone, this bold bird. No, not alone: a modest little brown thing nestled by his side, and he led her forward, as it were, by the wing, with a scrape of the leg—the mended one—and a bob of the head on his own part. 'Twas *Jane Wren, his wife;* and the two were come to bid little Zillah God-speed in her life's journey.

One more appearance was poor Robin Redbreast destined to make. A pleasant little banshee, he only appeared at the window when there were "tidings of comfort and joy" abroad. He had to stop away this time the better part of a year. Perhaps he had other casements to call at.

I knew it; I was persuaded of it; I always said it. They were exactly the young couple to have them. It made a tremendous ado in the town; congratulations poured in on Mr. and Mrs. Keene. Squire Gervoise (now himself married to *such* a rich, tall, banker's daughter—*so* tall, *so* blue, *so* High Church) sent his compliments and a handsome silver caudle-cup. Old Mr. Prawnby in the High Street cracked his jokes, and said that he ought to have charged double for the wedding-ring. Twins! I always prophesied twins: too lovely little girls.

Now you can't doubt this, ye sceptics! Like the individual who pointed to the "identical brick in the chimney" to prove that the house he lived in had once been inhabited by Jack Cade, I refer you triumphantly to the "Times" newspaper of January

1850, where you will find among the "births" this announcement:—"At Celsus Cottage, Shrimpington-super-Mare, Mrs. Septimus Keene, of twins—girls." Have ye any doubts respecting poor Robin Redbreast now, O unbelievers?

The twins and their mamma had done wonderfully well, and at the expiration of a fortnight there was a ceremony gone through at Celsus Cottage, very pleasant and delightful to witness. Little Zillah—she was always little Zillah—"came down stairs." No, she did not exactly descend of herself, for, to tell the truth, she was carried down two flights in her husband's arms, she laughing all the way and declaring that she was quite strong. They set her in a great arm-chair in the keeping-room, propped her up with pillows, bade her not excite herself, tried to make her an invalid; but little Zillah's merriment was not to be subdued, and she soon had a laughing circle round her.

When there came a slight, but very confident, tapping at the window pane.

"The Robin! the Robin!" cried little Zillah, clapping her hands. "Oh, dear papa! Oh, 'goosey,' dear, the Robin! Open the window, some one, pray!"

They opened the window very cautiously, for fear of giving the pretty convalescent cold; and there, blazing in the snow, with apparently a new scarlet waistcoat donned expressly for the occasion, was that incorrigible, that shameless, that abandoned Robin Redbreast. Ah! say not so: the grateful little bird had but come to pay his yearly homage to his fair mistress. Not alone, either, poor Robin Redbreast. At his side was Jenny Wren, his wife, and by *her* side—don't laugh, don't tear this sheet to ribbons—*were two glossy, diminutive little birds, just fledged*, Robin's Twins!

I think I had better emigrate after this. I can't show my face in society after this exposure of absurdity. It would be as well, perhaps, to retire to a monastery till this unpleasant affair has blown over. No, I won't! I will be as confident as poor Robin Redbreast. I plead Christmas in extenuation. It is only once a year. It is good to be childish sometimes: so take my story

for once with ever so liberal a pinch of salt. And, again, I ask, "Why not? Why shouldn't the story be true?" Didn't those large-hearted feathered little fellows cover the Children in the Wood with leaves? Isn't there the ballad of the Norfolk Tragedy and the Cruel Uncle to bear me out? So here, say I, is health, and here too happiness, to all young couples, and a short shrift to the curmudgeon who would kill a Bobin.

MONTAULIEU.

The ghastly glade of Montaulieu,
That Heav'n has e'en deprived of dew,
That never saw the sun;
The boughs above, enlacéd fast
Like prison bars, their shadows cast
Upon the herbage dun.
The toad, the newt, and fouler things
That web-foot creep, or flap with wings,
Gloze o'er the ooze and mud.
There is a pool within the glade,
That by its red clay base is made
To look like one of blood;
A beggar's coat of ragged green
Obscures its dank, unwholesome sheen;
But thro' the stagnant rents
Th' ensanguined pod the eye perceives,
With skeletons of bye-gone leaves
In matted filaments.
The raven knows the gloomy glade,
And croaks in its corrupted shade;
It is the adder's haunt;
The stealthy blind worm slimès the bank,
And winds among the rushes rank
In evolutions gaunt.
If Ceres, with her bounteous hand
Scatt'ring the seed along the land,
Threw here a grain of corn,

Some rankling weed or creeping tare,
Some fox-glove fell or hemlock bare,
Would rise before the morn.
The crop would be accurs'd by Heaven,
The bread would be the Demon's leaven,
Fermented by his breath;
From this abandon'd, rotting place
The kindly Seasons turn their face,
And Nature's birth is death.
Now mark yon tree half-stripp'd of bark,
And eye that stain, brown, broad, and dark;
Know well that scathéd wreck.
'Twas here the base De Montfort slew
The gallant Sire of Montaulieu;
He stabb'd him in the neck.

. . . . . .

The Lady Isabelle came down
From out her bower to the town.
Close veil'd was her visage;
Nor seneschal nor maidens twain
Had she; none followed in her train
Save Isabeau the page.
She left the castle's lordly keep,
And rode adown the rugged steep,
A stately sight to see.
Hers was a jennet black and sleek,
And his a dappled pony meek,
As suited his degree.
The burghers in the jagged street
Came round about her palfrey's feet,
And kiss'd her garment's hem;
They bow'd upon her jewell'd hand,
And called her Lady of the Land:
She never heeded them.
They pray'd their taxes might abate,
She ey'd them with a glance of hate

That pierc'd the muslin veil;
The murmur'd plaint was quick refused,
She smiling scorn'd, as tho' amused,
Each lamentable tale.
Right thro' the town of Montaulieu,
Towards the south her course was due;
She pass'd the barriers by,
The naked pollards on the plain
Shudder'd and shook, as though in pain,
And low'ring was the sky.
As to the page she turn'd to speak,
In brief commands, a sudden shriek
Broke from the tortur'd wind;
Releas'd by th' agoniséd air,
Down fell her rich and raven hair,
Her veil stream'd out behind.
'Twas seen by Isabeau, the page,
Who eyed it with a silent rage,
Yet loved each silken tress.
"Did ever Eudes, or Charlemagne,"
Thought he, "or Siegneur of Champagne,
Wear such a regal dress?"
They rode and rode till trees were rare,
And till a plain of verdure bare
Loomed wearily in view;
Three roods away, but right a-head,
A black oasis, there was spread
The glade of Montaulieu.
Then slow and solemn trod each horse,
As tho' it bore to earth a corse—
The very hoofs seemed hushed.
And, as they near'd the fatal glade,
The lady's hands from bridle stray'd,
To hide the tears that gush'd.
She cast herself from off her steed,
And fiercely bade the page proceed;

She would be left alone.
Then she began to weep and wail,
And madly tear her snowy veil,
And cry in piteous tone :—
"How long, oh Heav'n! how long to wait,
How long till just, but tardy fate,
Avenge my murder'd lord!
Yon trees have had full time to grow,
Since first these tears began to flow;
Since last was drawn that sword.
The dastard slew him in not in fight,
With trusty lance or falchion bright,
In tilt or tented field.
He lur'd him to an ambush blind;
He foully stabb'd him from behind;
He dar'd not bid him yield.
He who would wipe away this stain,
A monarch's appanage should gain;
Hear this, who thirst for pelf:
He, who will strike the traitor down,
Shall have my castle and my town;
Nay, he shall have myself!
I swear on this emblazon'd glove
To be his lady and his love;
And come he soon or late,
Be he the vilest varlet knave,
I swear to be his serf and slave,
His meek obedient mate.
So I'll the price of blood repay,"
She said, and cast the glove away.
In bootless challenge? no!
The page stoop'd down, pick'd up the glove,
"Thou art the Lady of my love,"
'Twas thus he murmur'd low.
He had approach'd, and unperceived
Had listen'd to her while she greived:

She never heeded *him* :
But eighteen summers tow'rds the grave,
What was he but a smooth-fac'd slave
Of each caprice and whim ?
She turn'd her head and saw him there,
Glanc'd o'er his form with scornful air,
(He trembling stood and mute,)
She sneer'd, and said with with'ring mien,
"But twelve months since, the scourge had been
An answer to thy suit.
Thou beardless lute-boy dare to love!"
He winced, but wav'd aloft the glove
With a triumphant cry :
"As thou didst swear, I swear again,
By Nôtre Dame of Mortemain
De Montfort he shall die.
He hath his camp before Toulouse;
By fair or foul, by fight or ruse,
He falls beneath my hand.
I love thee, Dame of Montaulieu,
Tho' page, I am thy champion true,
Thou Lady of the Land."
'Twas then the young and lusty rose,
Did with the lily come to blows,
For mast'ry on her cheek.
But soon the glad all-mighty sway,
Of God's red sunshine won the day :
She blushed and could not speak.
And now, the first for dreary years,
The haughty woman's loving tears
(Those others were of rage)
Cours'd down her sorrow-channelled face,
Cours'd down in rivulets of grace,—
She smil'd and kiss'd the page.
"Now, lady, I must haste away :
Thou'lt give me twelve months and a day,

For my avenging track.
And then, when next the sky is red,
Be sure De Montfort he is dead,
And I am coming back."
They journey'd back towards the town,
The clouds conspir'd, the rain fell down,
And sluic'd the arid plain.
No heed of storm—farewell to pride,
The page and dame rode side by side,
And they were one though twain.

. . . . . .

The Lady Isabelle came down
From out her bower to the town;
Bright smil'd her frank visage—
A squire, and comely maidens twain,
In rich attire were in her train—
She was without a page.
She passed through jagged Montaulieu,
The town, and not the glade you knew,
And smil'd on Christian and on Jew,
And bade god-den to all;
And joyously she rode a-head,
For in the west the sky was red—
God's sky that covers all.
The poppies waved among the corn,
The birds rejoiced that they were born,
The distant hills were blue.
She halted in the arid plain,
And jocundly bade halt her train,
And sped t'wards Montaulieu.
She rode towards the ghastly glade,
And as she rode a solemn shade
Began the scene to fill.
Ride on, thou dame—right straight a-head—
Ride on, De Montfort he is dead—

The Dead ride faster still.[1]
Just where the stain was brown and dark
Upon the tree bereft of bark,
But not by storm or age;
Prone, prone upon the stagnant mud,
And all around a pool of blood,
Lay Isabeau the page.
He had his feet towards Toulouse,
And there was blood upon his shoes
And blood upon his vest;
And by him close De Montfort lay—
Both dead until the last long day
Shall lay us all at rest.
A broken brand, a bloody hand,
The fainting Lady of the Land;[2]
Two corses stiff and stark;
An errant horse that curious feeds
On dank and grim unwholesome weeds:—
And now the glade is dark.

. . . . . .

The far-up keep is Montcastel;
You know the grisly tower well,
The cliff that soars above.
'Tis there a maniac woman lies
And cries for death, but never dies,
And hugs a blazoned glove.

[1] Burger: "Lenore." [2] Coleridge's "Génévière."

ABOUT SHRIMPINGTON.

THE poets, dear neighbour, tell us that there is no sorrow more poignant than the remembrance of happy days in misery. They have been telling us so in a dozen languages for centuries. Dante has said it in Italian, Malesherbes in French, Alfred Tennyson in English; and, for aught we know, it is being said or sung now by the poet in ordinary to the Tycoon of Japan, the bard accompanying himself, meanwhile, on a mandolin all covered with lacquer work Now, in this case, neighbour, I would have you not to believe the poets. You may trust them—so far as you can see them—when they sing about the skylarks, and rude Boreas, or gentle Zephyr, though they are sometimes wide of the mark in their ornithology—bringing down their game with very long shots from very long bows—and though the late General Reid would have taught them something worth knowing about the Law of Storms. But you really must disregard their pretty paradoxical rhymes for once. I will demolish the poets in a trice; for this is Christmas time, and having two dinner-invitations for the day—I shall throw over the one in Camberwell Grove—I am valorous and self-confident. No sorrow more poignant than the remembrance of happy days in misery! How about those who have never been happy at all? Let me put a case. Here are Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy going to be married at the ivy-grown church. Pipe and tabor, and "loud bassoon," of course, playing before. Bridegroom's papa crying, he doesn't know why; bride's mamma crying more plentifully—why, she knows full well. Bridegroom's best man looking very much as though he would like to be married himself; bridesmaids blushing and giggling as though they were of the same way of thinking: bride and bridegroom looking as such young couples only

can look under similar circumstances—deliciously uncomfortable, and pleasantly terrified; little boys following the procession cheering, and long-bodied dog, with the hair all off his left flank, bringing up the rear, one ragged ear cunningly cocked, and possibly with some thoughts, too, of matrimony in his doggish head. Now there stands by the church porch a certain widower, who, but a few months since, has buried a fair young wife in the green God's Acre. Pipe and tabor, loud bassoon and merry train pass him, and he bows his head very sorrowfully, and turns away. They would fain bid him to the wedding feast, but he is too sad. Yes; and is full of remembrance of his own happy time. But see, over against him stands moody, with folded arms and bent brow, in coarse gray woollen shroud and sandalled feet, Brother Meagrim the Trappist. Pipe and tabor, loud bassoon and merry train pass him too; but they avoid his gloomy looks, and he eyes them evilly. The widower hies him home and sits solitary, but with a chastened tenderness in his heart, and, perchance, humming fitfully the air which his dear dead girl used to sing as she plied her knitting on the hassock at his feet. The Trappist stalks to his monastery, and so into the field, whence, after digging for an hour at his own grave, he skulks to his cell, there, in the society of the skull, the hour-glass, and the homilies of St. Gridiron the Great, to eat his own heart. Which is the most miserable man? He who has possessed and lost all but happy memories, or he who has never found, and is forbidden to seek, and can look, backward or forward, but upon a dead level, quite barren, hopeless, and forlorn?

Though sackcloth I wear for my sins, and sickness lay me by the heels, though the crust of the loaf in the cupboard be low, and naught but the stump of the cheque-book remain, I would not surrender—no, not one—of the memories of by-gone happy days, and their remembrance shall gild the gray horizon now, and turn the barley-water into Burgundy. Would you have me think with dolour now, because Fortune frowns, of the happy days and nights I have spent? When I first fell in love, when I first—but it was Alpha and Omega—heard some one say they loved me; when I first tasted pineapple-ice, heard Grisi, and

saw the *Belle Jardinière* of Raffaelle! Away, sighers and moaners! We *will* think of the *tempo felice*—the happy time, even when our lodging is on the cold ground, in the deepest dungeon beneath the castle moat. We will recall these days, with a strong and courageous hope and faith that the bolts shall be drawn, and the fetters stricken off, the castle razed to the ground, and the tyrannical baron exemplarily hanged! Yea, and then the happy days shall return again, fuller of joy than ever!

Now, I especially hold, neighbour, with the preservation of these wholesome remembrances with respect to the days of days in our life-calendar—the Christmases. For my own part, I know my Christmas days by heart, can tell them backwards on my fingers, can remember them *seriatim* from the day that I can remember anything at all. Many of them merry, some, by heaven's goodness, almost inexpressibly happy—some mournful—one dark and almost despairing, but all remembered well.

Some twenty-five Christmas days can I recall distinctly, and, were they sad or joyful, they are all equally memorable. The very happiest, however, had a pleasant sameness about them that would move your indignation if narrated. Many of my readers, I hope, would like to kiss the same young lady at forfeits for ten years running, yet the tenfold reiteration of the description of the feat would be intolerable. Still, two Christmases find place on my bede-roll, which, not being there, would cause one British writer the less to address you in this present year of grace. They are the Christmases I spent at SHRIMPINGTON-SUPER-MARE.

Very nearly twelve years ago I was of age, and of opinion that the eyes of Europe were upon me. It is impossible to express the contempt I felt for young men who were *not* of age, and how fully I concurred with some writer of the day who scoffed at the idea of youths falling in love before they had attained their twenty-first year. So, being my own master, I straightway became somebody else's slave, and acted in the usual manner of fools according to their own folly.

Yes; I was certainly very much in love in the winter of the eventful year that poor old Louis Philippe tumbled off the throne

which his own shuffling had made so slippery. I must have been in love, because my sweetheart and I quarrelled so frequently. We had, on one of the gloomiest days in November, a ferocious fall-out about an abominable little Skye terrier of my Lucy's, which was always snapping at my ankles, and with which—meeting the beast *alone* one day in the passage—I had had a few words causing him to yelp fearfully. *She* vowed never to speak to me again; and I went off to Paris in a huff.

Of course, we were reconciled very speedily, through the medium of the general post—in these days I believe we should have made it up by telegraph—nevertheless I could not help stopping a week or eight days in Paris, not having seen the dear old place since I was a boy at school. The time, however, came at last for my return to "England, home, and beauty." A very pretty message from Beauty herself intimated that I was expected to dine with Beauty's papa and mamma on Christmas day; and December was growing old, when, one stormy night, I stood shivering in the peculiarly uncomfortable waiting-room of the more uncomfortable custom-house at Cæsarville, in the county of Kent, having just landed—if crawling up a ladder and on to a slimy quay may be called landing—wet, cold, and weary from her Majesty's Royal mail packet *Squidfish*.

The morning of the next day was a glorious one. Bright, sunny, bracing. Sky blue and without a cloud. Sea dancing, and flickering, and kissing the shore like sportive girls round a good-tempered old gentleman. I walked about the town, looked at the castle, peered up the shaft, glanced at the queer little summer-houses nestling far up among the chalky heights, and wondered that some of them didn't tumble down once or twice a week, talked to the boatman, lost my hat on the pier, and gave a shilling to a boy in a suit of tarpaulin for running after it, went back to the "Centurion Hotel" and had my breakfast, smoked one of the incredibly bad cigars for which Cæsarville is famous, wondered whereabout on the beach Cæsar himself landed, and whether he came here *summâ diligentiâ* as he did into Gaul strolled to the basin, and shook my fist at my old (last night) enemy, her Majesty's Royal mail packet *Squidfish*. The result

of all these perambulations was, that I missed the morning trains one after the other; and found after lunch and some ale—the ale is excellent at Cæsarville—that I should have to wait till four p.m. for a train, and that a slow one, to convey me to London. I rather like missing trains than otherwise; it gives you so much extra time; so I had half made up my mind, not being due in town till late next day, to pass another twelve hours in Cæsarville, when the foxy waiter remarked that there was a coach to St. Becketsbury at three, and that perhaps I might like to see the "Kthedral." I wondered, at the time, whatever a servitor of an hotel could mean by advising a traveller, who seemed able to pay his bill, to seek other pastures; but I am of opinion now, either that the foxy waiter was a fool, or that he hated the landlord or landlady of the "Centurion Hotel" with more than Indian ferocity, and that he desired nothing better than to lure travellers away from the good accommodation and neat wines of that well-conducted caravanserai. Be it as it may, I took his advice, and an outside place by the three o'clock coach to St. Becketsbury.

I had never visited that ancient cathedral city, and longed to do so. What lover of old English legends, what student of old English manners and customs, would not share my desire? Famous old saintly city of Kent, embosomed in fertile valley, girdled in by wooded hills and grassy slopes, from which run dancing rills! I wanted to see Cogan's Hospital; to find some graybeard who would point out the spots where once stood Newin and Otchill and Winecheap gates, and St. Mildred's postern; the ancient Worthgate with its "bayle," and the mighty Dane John. I thirsted to behold the immortal "Chequers Inn," where Chaucer's pilgrims assembled, mingling piety with conviviality, and whence, perchance, issued the "bacon-fed knaves" whom Falstaff robbed on Gadshill; chiefest of all I longed to see the glorious cathedral; and with hushed footsteps approach the spot where once stood the shrine of the martyred Saint Thomas of Becketsbury. And as the coach bore me up and down the steep hills that surge throughout the sixteen miles hat lie between Cæsarville and St. Becketsbury, I tried to recall

the grim scene of slaughter as I had read of it: of the monks crooning forth the vesper chaunt in the choir, and the two children rushing up the nave, and telling more by gestures than by speech that armed men were forcing the gates of the cathedral. Of the bad knights trampling with mailed feet through the cloisters, vizors drawn over their faces, that were blanched as much by terror at the deed they were about to do, as by the raging hate that made them do it. Vindictive Tracy, fierce Robert Fitz-Ranulph, scowling Hugh of Horsea surnamed Mauclerc, Robert de Broc's chaplain, and furious Fitzurse, with the axe he had taken from the carpenters, hoarsely shouting, "Here, here, King's-men!" Of the undaunted archbishop, standing defiant on the altar steps—the craven ecclesiastics of his suite all, save Robert of Merton and William Fitz-Stephen, fled. "Where is Becket, traitor to the king?" Fitzurse crying, with hungry hatchet swinging to and fro. Clear and sonant, from the crepuscular shade of pillars and arches comes a voice—"Reginald, here I am: Archbishop and Priest of God: no traitor. What seek you?" Of the last deadly struggle in the chapel of Saint Benedict. The horrid blows dealt with sword and axe; the martyr at last—in his white rotchet, cloak, and hood—falling, his hands joined in prayer, flat on his face on the pavement, and with such dignity that his mantle, which extends from head to foot, is not disarranged. "I commend my cause, and the cause of the church, to God, to St. Denys of France, to St. Alphage, and to the saints of the church." So he falls—

> "Deserted in his utmost need,
> By those his former bounty fed,
> On the bare earth exposed he lies,
> With not a friend to close his eyes."

So fell Darius. And the murderers thrust their swords into his gaping wounds, and scatter his brains over the pavement, the wretched Mauclerc (striking but a corpse) crying, "Let us go! let us go! the traitor is dead—he will rise no more!" Not here, O Mauclerc! but rise again he will, and testify to thy damnation!

"St. Becketsbury! St. Becketsbury!" I repeated as the

"spanking tits," which, by the way, were on this occasion more "spanked" themselves than "spanking," clattered along. At St. Becketsbury is the tomb of the famous Black Prince. He lies in the cathedral: his marble effigy recumbent; his arms hanging above—

> "His sword is rust,
> His bones are dust,
> His soul is with the Saints, we trust."

And over his grave is cast the casual shadow of three feathers, that will be famous as an historic symbol so long as history endures. Curious link that binds this old carved tomb in Becketsbury minster with the bloody field of Cressy; with blind King John of Bohemia tying his horse's bridle to that of the knight next him, and charging into the hot fight, to be found afterwards in that field of carnage, "his old, blind face looking very blindly to the stars;" on his shield blazoned a plume of three ostrich feathers, with "Ich Dien," "I serve," written under—with which every English reader is to be familiar ever after.

"St. Becketsbury, St. Becketsbury," I kept repeating, exhilarated by the bracing atmosphere, the rapid locomotion, and the fumes of some capital *caporal* tobacco I had purchased just before I left Paris—I think, too, I must have had some money in my pocket, which fully accounts for any extra exuberance of spirits. Why, I am in the very centre of Tom Ingoldsby's delightful legend land! Hereabouts must be the churchyard where lay the drowned mariner, who persisted after death in grinning in a ghastly and unearthly manner to the discredit of St. Bridget; not far from here are the sands to which was washed the skull of Graydolphin, kicked (to his own destruction) by the wicked baron who so imperiously demanded his boots. Not far from here dwelt the Leech of Folkstone, and the naughty, handsome sorceress who stuck corking pins into waxen images, affected the society of black cats, and was partial to olive-skinned young gentlemen of Spanish extraction. My head began to swim with the wild legends of the chronicler of Tappington Everard. I raised my eyes from my perch on the box-seat, skyward, as

though in quest of Madge Gray and Goody Price, skimming through the air on broomsticks; but then I remembered that we were already half way to St. Becketsbury; and that I should see the "dark entry" to the Dean's Yard, and read the grim legend of Nell Cook: how the dark lady from the Spanish Main came to see the prior, whom she hailed as uncle; and how the infuriated cook put the poker and the tongs in that fair lady's bed, and ultimately made a warden pie, "with doctor's stuff inside," eating which, both the prior and his neice died horribly. How, at the funeral of the ill-fated pair,

> "The sacristan, he said no word to indicate a doubt,
> But he put his thumb up to his nose, and spread his fingers out."

How, centuries after, the skeleton of Nell Cook was discovered under a flagstone in the "dark entry," where she had been buried alive by the cruel monks, with a piece of the fatal warden pie beside her; how the masons who disentombed her remains all came to a bad end: two were hanged at Tyburn-tree for murdering of the third;

> "And one got burnt, and one got drowned, and one beyond the seas
> Got scraped to death with oyster-shells, among the Caribees."

And how the ghost of Nell Cook has haunted the "dark entry" every Friday night since, to the dismay of the maid-servants who are sent out at nine o'clock for the "Dean's" supper-beer.

All these things I thought of, and all these visits I intended to pay. As it so fell out, however (and has fallen out a good many times in this narrator's life), no part of my intention was fulfilled. That same ship, "Good Intent," A 1, copper-bottomed, and registered at a mental Lloyd's, was, before the day was out, wrecked and stranded, hard and fast at Shrimpington-super-Mare.

For I must needs leave the coach at Daiseybridge, six miles from St. Becketsbury, just to pay a flying visit to Shrimpington, designing to walk afterwards to the Cathedral city, and so take train. The day was so fine and bracing, you see. Shrimpington is quite discernible from the summit of Daiseybridge hill, being, indeed, but two miles distant therefrom; but I did not pay my flying visit to it on foot. To tell the truth, there sat beside me

outside the coach a worthy farrier, in a drab shooting-jacket and light cords, who gave me such a glowing description of Shrimpington—he did not in the least mean it to be enthusiastic—as one of the queerest places you ever set eyes on—"the last village made after the flood, and then only half finished"—that I snuffed game at once, and murmured, mentally, "For Shrimpington, ho!" The farrier, who was a most conversational person, would not hear of my walking to Shrimpington; he had a light cart, "under duty," with his mare "Sukey"—particulars of whose life, extraction, education, and manners, and of her former owner, the butcher, and penultimate proprietor, the cooper, he was good enough to give me in full—waiting for him at the "Willing Mind" inn, Daiseybridge; so, after moderate reflection at the last-named establishment, I, the farrier, and my portmanteau, were all rattling in the light cart, after the black mare, down the break-neck hill which led into the valley of chalky meadow, in the centre of which—a ring of white chalk round it—lay Shrimpington, like a toy Geneva watch in a big, dusty hand. And all beyond the wintry sea.

I slept that night at the "Godwin's Head," Shrimpington, and I awoke the next morning in as fine an access of rheumatic gout as a man of indifferent constitution could well desire. It may be that the sheets were not aired: it is certain that I forgot to put the looking-glass into bed, previous to getting in myself, according to my usual custom, for the farrier had betaken himself to singing sentimental songs during the evening, and we were rather late. It may have been the bracing air, over the bleak downs. At all events, I was "down with the rheumatiz" to my heart's content, and lay groaning for five days. I took to hobbling about the town, after that, with a stick; but I was no longer in a hurry to reach London. I *had been compelled to spend Christmas-day at Shrimpington*, and there was the oldest of scratches to pay not a hundred miles from Mornington Crescent. "Sir: no further communication from you will receive the slightest attention, from yours obediently, Lucy." This was the sort of *billet doux* I had to cheer me during my convalescence. We never made it up. William Edward Noseby, of the London and

Westminster Bank, who hated and was jealous of me, told her—I afterwards discovered—that I was seen dancing at the Salle Valentino, Paris, on the very day I wrote to her to say that I was lying in excruciating agonies, in bed, at Shrimpington. I must have correspondents there, she said—"vile creatures, who abet you in your wicked, wicked subterfuges," she called them in her concluding epistle, dated Wednesday. She didn't have Noseby after all, but married a Mr. Cheale, and went to Canada. The climate is very sharp there, I believe, and I hope Cheale's bones have benefited thereby, and that Welsh flannel and opodeldoc are as dear as turtle soup is here.

I have done with an unpleasant subject, and can now devote myself wholly to Shrimpington. After all, it took at least fifty per cent. away from the dolour of the rheumatism, to reflect upon the genuine kindness and sympathy I experienced from the worthy people who kept the house. In many country places, my moustache—a vanity I then affected, but which has since, I rejoice to say, come away in patches, like the hair from a trunk that has been kept in the damp—might have created, at the outset, a prejudice against me; but the Shrimpingtonians were a sea-going race, were always having friends and relatives coming home from "furrin parts," very much bronzed, and with prodigious quantities of hair on their faces, and had rather a partiality for "outlandish folks" than otherwise. I was outlandish enough for them, in all conscience. I am sure that if Mr. Whelks, of the "Godwin's Head"—formerly a channel pilot—had been my father; if Mrs. Whelks, some time cook and housekeeper to Squire Gervoise, of the Priory, had been my mother; and if Amy Whelks, aged seventeen, their only and blooming child, had been my sister, or—well! out with it—my sweetheart, they could not have shown me more attention, or taken more care of me.

Shrimpington Super-mare had been at one time a fishing and shipping port of some consequence: one of the Onze ports, indeed; and there were legends that at some remote period of time it had been a borough, returned members to Parliament, and had rejoiced in a mayor and corporation. But I suppose the M. and C. had misbehaved themselves during some epoch of our history—perhaps

refused to lend the king money—and the irate sovereign had taken away their charter. Indeed there were two rickety, bulging storeys of crumbling red brick, with stone dressings, over the market as the damp little cavern supported by corrugated beams, where a few venders of fish and vegetables assembled at their stalls every Saturday morning, was called; and this, still according to tradition, had once been the town hall. I persuaded the shaky old man who kept the keys of this deserted abode of ygone municipal glories, to allow me to ascend the rotting stairs, and peep into the dilapidated chambers. There was one room in tolerably good repair, where Squire Gervoise and the Reverend Mr. Cobbum, ordinarily called Parson Cobbum, sat in petty sessions when there was anything to adjudicate upon in Shrimpington, civilly or criminally, which was but seldom. There was another room, with "collector of the port" painted on the door; but as there was no longer any port, or anything to collect save mud, shingle, and stale fish, the great community of rats had long since held undisturbed possession of it. And there was a long low apartment underneath the roof, with blank windows reaching to the floor, and set close together, like holes that had been hastily glazed with any odd panes of horn lanterns or scraps of bottle-glass that came handy; an apartment in a generally woful condition, and which always gave me the impression that the upstairs room in Temple Bar must be its twin brother.

This dreary chamber, from whose damp ceiling the very cobwebs dropped off in despair at the exceeding moisture, was cumbered with odds and ends, through which I should have dearly liked to rummage, and all of which I connected with the defunct importance of Shrimpington when it was a borough. There were great scales and weights all rusted and bent about, there were dismantled balustrades, and legless, inkstandless desks; rolls of worm-eaten baize, which in the few spots where colour at all existed, showed a dull crimson, and tied with rotting cord. These rolls of baize had, perchance, been laid down when foreign notabilities —great barons and puissant seignors—had landed at Shrimpington, and walked to the town hall, to be entertained by the mayor and corporation. But what mostly interested me were

the huge rolls of ragged paper and worm-eaten parchment mouldering away peaceably in corners amid heaps of those indefinable scraps of rubbish which always seem to accumulate, heaven knows from whence, in a room which has gone to decay. I could have taken my affidavit that these old rolls contained rough draughts of that bygone corporation's addresses to the great people who had visited Shrimpington in the days of its grandeur, if it ever had any grandeur. From some of the rat-gnawed parchment scrolls I could discern tatters of ribbon furtively peeping, to which were attached lumps of decaying matter, which had once been seals. "Thus runs the way of the world," I said to myself: "it is not such a very glaring improbability to believe that her Majesty Queen Anne, of blessed memory, may have visited Shrimpington; nay, in this very room she may have held a temporary court, in order to 'touch for the evil,' and have hung pieces of angel gold about the necks of fisher children. The corporation presented her with a loyal and dutiful address, and she returned a gracious answer—entombed among yon mouldering *debris*. What does it matter now? the words of fulsomeness, the ink almost expressed from them, lie there as futile as old love-letters." So, thus moralising, I left the place.

I now went down to have a look at the "port." It was the most woebegone excavation, full of mud and fishy refuse, you ever saw. There was a brig, with a broom at her mast-head, which had been for sale for the last quarter of a century; but the inhabitants of Shrimpington had at least shown some common sense by unanimously refusing to buy her during that period of time. They had further displayed some of the wisdom of the serpent by purloining the major portion of her timbers for firewood; and she lay now high and dry upon the mud, a very ghastly wooden skeleton to view. Some old wherries gone to irrevocable seed plashed in the scant puddles where there was any water; high tide, though it must have occurred at its stated seasons, never greeted my eyes in Shrimpington. From either extremity of the hole facetiously denominated a "basin," there jutted out seaward a crazy pier, supported on a cobweb framework of timbers, black, turned up with green, and finished off with

seaweed and barnacles, the interstices of the timbers themselves being filled with jagged stones. The piers, albeit stunted, and the planks that formed their platform gone to an oozy decay, were solid enough in their foundations. Only those versed in the early chronicle of the Onze Ports could tell how long they had stood there, their bases washed by the pertinacious waves, now angry, now imploring, like a passionate woman at the feet of an obdurate and immoveable man. Yes, sea, you wash away landmarks, bear away cliffs, submerge churches, engulf whole towns and villages; but you are to be vanquished sometimes. The marble blocks that Trajan fenced the harbour of Civita Vecchia withal, yet defy the treacherous encroaching blue; and many a gaunt old Pharos yet stands flashing its torches mockingly in the crested waves, and laughing their fury to scorn.

There was plenty of beach at Shrimpington, and, about a mile from the east pier, plenty of cliff—grim, chalky upland, from whose lean height few would care to hang to gather samphire or sea-mews' nests, and crowned with a ragged wig of gray-green herbage. On the east cliff—the town itself lying in the valley—was Shrimpington old church, an humble fabric of shard and shingle, but immensely old, originally a temple of Neptune, erected by Alexander Severus, destroyed by the Danes, partially rebuilt by Ethelred the unready, finished by the King Stephen whose nether habiliments cost him but a crown, half demolished by Cromwell's General Ireton, and at last "beautified" and quite spoiled by a Dutch architect. This old church had a marvellous slate steeple all awry, perhaps involuntarily emulating the leaning tower of Pisa, and with a deformed weathercock on its apex, which bore an equal resemblance to a dismasted ship and a split herring. The churchyard was a dead green sea, crested with gray-white tombstones erected to the memory of departed master-mariners and ship-chandlers, sometime of this parish. The interior of the church presented the not unusual spectacle of beautiful architecture, tracery, and carving covered with thick coats of whitewash, and an organ-loft, in which, on Sundays, the oldest inhabitant of Shrimpington accompanied the psalms on a violincello, while the youngest bachelor kept him in countenance with a clarionet, and

which was, moreover, disfigured by a hideous board trumpeting forth in chocolate paint and whitewash the semi-ruination of the church, decoratively speaking, with excessive whitewash, under the auspices of Noah Scaleyshad and Perfect Prawnby, churchwardens. In the chancel there were some dim monumental brasses, a handsomely-carved mural tablet, held up by bloated cupids, and surmounted by death's heads, pineapples, hour-glasses, scythes, cornucopias, and laurel crowns—quite Elizabethian—in remembrance of Don Juan José Maria Ramon Sanchez y Garcia y Iturbide, a hidalgo of Spain, cast on the shore near Shrimpington. "after ye terrible wrecke of ye Spanyshe kynge's Galleon 'Amor y Caridad,' A.D. 1588," whose body was afterwards recognised by the sole survivor from the wreck, "Luis, his faithful blacke boye." A store of moidores was, I presume, sent from Spain by some disconsolate Inez or Ximena, to raise this monument to the drowned Hidalgo: never more to wear Toledo rapier, or be inflamed by wicked eyes glancing over a fan: never more to hold rope-ladders, or twang guitar, or slay commendatores. Very dead, this drowned Don. I pass over the innumerable tablets to divers worthy squires, from the times of Edward IV. downwards, all of the Gervoise line, and lords of this manor of Shrimpington. Rest they all in peace, they and the recumbent figure of "Dame Patience Gervoise, very loving wyfe of Sir Chauncey Gervoise, called of ye goldenne arme"—why?—who lies under a richly-carved Gothic canopy, whitewashed, of course. She died *en couches*, poor woman, and the little marble effigy of her still-born baby nestles on her breast.

So this of the old church. Along the west cliff, abased almost to the beach, there ran a straggling line of quaint old houses—some of them little more than hovles—timber built, their gables forming frontage, and carefully tarred in every plank. They were all extremely fishy. All, through their doors perpetually on the jar, offered the same perspective interior of crockery, dried seaweed, tobacco smoke, well-scrubbed floors sanded, deal tables, and children more or less accoutred in salt-smelling tarpaulin. One or two houses were pretentious, and had gardens, from whose rich chalk and shingle soil sprang abundant crops of under-garments,

blue striped mostly, fluttering from poles, dried fish impaled, and cats contemplative on lean-to roofs.

I have little to say concerning the adult maritime population of Shrimpington. They were, I was given to understand, somewhat of a lazy generation, and looked upon the neighbouring workhouse more in the light of a caravanserai, with nothing to pay, devised for the use of them and their heirs for ever, than as an abode of pauperism. They were not very courageous, either, at Shrimpington; and though not averse, betimes, to a quiet bout of smuggling, and enjoying rather an unenviable reputation as wreckers, they never evinced any particular desire to "man the life-boat," or to respond to the appeal, of guns signalling distress. They fished, and mended their nets, and cured some of their finny game, seldom fought, and drank a thin, sour beer, known as "civil"; and when their children were fractious, forbore to smack them, but gave them coppers, and, in default of the circulating medium, oyster-shells.

Some of these saline stoics had olive complexions, glittering complexions, and long, lissome blue-black hair; and some odd names existed among them—Rodricks, Miggles, Gummiz, and Alvreys, suggestive of the Rodrigues, Miguels, Gomezes, and Alvarezes of a certain place called sunny Spain. The folklore of Shrimpington said that a company of shipwrecked Spanish mariners had been allowed to form a colony here, after the dispersion of the Spanish Armada, and had insensibly been absorbed among the Jutes and Angles. From this you may judge that they were a pacific race, idle and unenterprising, who gave the relieving-officer more trouble than the rural policeman. They were grossly ignorant, and almost incredibly superstitious. Ghosts and witches abounded; and when the strange wanderer Thom—half-maniac, half-imposter—who called himself Sir Edward Courtenay, disturbed the countryside about St. Becketsbury with his mystical pranks, and was at length slain by the soldiers—after himself shooting a gallant young officer to death—Shrimpington numbered more than one enthusiast who made pilgrimages to the dead-house where the corpse of the mad mountebank lay, with kerchiefs which they vainly prayed to be allowed to dip in his *blood*.

Don't think I learned all this by personal observation or inquiry. I limped too sorely, I brooded too frequently on that young person near Mornington Crescent, to wander or to seek much. My chief informant, my prime chronicler, my inexhaustible talking guide-book, was Mr. Prawnby, the jeweller, of No. 7, in the High Street.

Which was no more like a High Street than I am like the Emperor of Siam, but it was called the "High Street," and shall have its title. Such a breakneck litle thread of a semi-blind alley! the tarred cabins of the cliff turned another way, and diversified here and there by a mean little brick house, with a projecting "bulk" of blackened timber above the ground floor. There were the butcher's shop, Mr. Bailey's, the greengrocer's, two bakers, both opposition, and hating each other cordially—they had married sisters; the hosier and linendraper's, the blacksmith's—my friend the farrier, by the way, and the noisiest man in the little town—the milliner's, she was not by any means the love-lorn old maid you usually find under similar circumstances, but a jolly widow, with a tribe of children. The bookseller's, his wife was a stay-maker; the tailor's, he sold ironmongery and hearth-brooms; the chemist's, half his shop was devoted to the retail confectionery business; the ship chandler's, he had a sack of sea biscuits, a coil of rope, and a sou'wester hat at his door, in case any distraught ship, with an ancient mariner aboard and an albatross hung about his neck, should turn up on those forsaken shores, and should need chandlery; but his hopes seemed long since to have been on the wane, and so he had thrown himself into the "hame," or cart-horse collar business, with an energy which had somehow stopped half-way, and then struck off at a tangent, resulting in tailors' trimmings. I need not enumerate all the shops—I have named enough, perhaps, already: humble, poorly-furnished little *baraques* they were mostly, and inspired you with the notion that stock-taking at Christmas would not be a very difficult task to their proprietors. Some few houses of a little more pretension specked the double line of cabins like plums in a pudding. There was the Methodist Chapel—Reverend Jabez Fishtail, minister; there was the lawyer's big brass plate,

as usual; there was Miss Twigg's boarding and day school for young ladies; and there was the doctor's—the real medical man of the place, Doctor Quinnington. His was a pretty little *maisonette* at the very top of the town, white, with green verandahs, a garden behind and a shrubbery before, the nattiest, most cheerful house in Shrimpington-super-mare.

As for my friend—he ultimately became my friend—Mr. Prawnby, he appeared to sell everything. He was ostensibly a jeweller and watchmaker:—was so in name, on his shop cornice; but there was a covert insinuation of "money lent," and a faded painting of three golden balls on a glass door; and to tell the truth, the Shrimpingtonians being indolent, impoverished, and improvident, his briskest business was in the pawnbroking line. But his commercial attributes did not stop here. He sold Dutch clocks. He sold quadrants, sextants, and binnacles. He had a dreary little show of wretchedly-executed oil paintings, and out-of-fashion engravings, printed from almost worn-out plates. You could buy birdcages at Mr. Prawnby's. He had a neat stock of pious books in very gay binding. He tempted your eyes with beach-pebbles set as bracelets and necklaces, and with landscapes formed by variously coloured sand in bottles. He was the sole agent for Dellacrusca's delicious nux vomica farinaceous food, for old Doctor Melphibosheth's tincture of assafœtida, for the celebrated Shaking Quaker's herbal pills (in family boxes, price eleven shillings), and for the "Irreproachable and British Indivisible Fire and Life Assurance Company." A very notable tradesman, Mr. Prawnby.

"Yes, sir," he replied, good-naturedly, to me one day when I was rallying him on the diversity of his stock, "I may say that I sell everything." "Fishing-rods and tackle?" "Yes, sir, I sell those, and likewise eel-spears. (He always called you "sir," and was intensely polite). Double-barreled guns I am unfortunately out of, but expect a consignment shortly." "Coffins?" "No, sir; you are really too hard upon me. Fry, the carpenter, *makes* the coffins; but many and many is the funeral that I have 'furnished' and 'performed' for the surrounding tradesmen and gentry." "Wedding-rings?" "I rather think I *do* sell wedding-rings.

Why, bless my heart, sir, where can your eyes be? There are half a dozen wedding rings on a card in the window."

I stepped outside, and verified Mr. Prawnby's assertion. True enough, between a battered silver teapot, a miniature of Queen Caroline in a hat and feathers, a hunting-whip, and a copy of Baxter's Bible, there hung a card, to which were stitched six plain, serviceable wedding-rings. Prawnby, who was a great humourist, made a joke directly I re-entered the shop, and hoped it would not be long before he had to supply me with one of the rings in question. I sighed, and thought of the inexorable young person in Mornington Crescent.

Mr. Prawnby and I were firm allies for upwards of a fortnight. My first visit to him was to obtain a new watch-key; and I found him so conversational, that, after that, scarcely a morning passed without my dropping in at his emporium, and having a quiet chat with him. He was a bachelor, and had neither kith nor kin; and, without being a misanthropist, had a settled mistrust in and dislike for the present times. "There was no good in 'em," he said, emphatically. "They were too fast for him. He couldn't keep up with 'em, not he, and didn't mean to try; and it was his belief, sir (he said this with a withering sneer), that everything was done now-a-days by steam." I suggested, humorously, that perhaps marriages were done by steam too, and without wedding-rings, for I observed that he had not taken one off the card that held the half-dozen. He sighed, and admitted that little Barney Lypscombe—who, only a year ago, was a pedlar—had opened a working jeweller's shop down town, was under-selling him in wedding-rings, and was driving a roaring trade; but not much louder than a sucking dove could any trade have roared in eighteen hundred and forty-eight in Shrimpington-super-Mare.

The wind roared loud enough, however, the day I left the desolate place, and came away quite strong and well. I passed Mr. Prawnby's warehouse, took a parting glass with him at the "Kings and Key," the second hostelry in Shrimpington; I had had a parting glass, and a parting kiss too, from somebody at the "Godwin's Head." The wind howled very dismally, and moaned a bleak farewell, as I entered the same kind-hearted farrier's

light cart, drawn by the same spirited mare, Sukey, which was to bear me to Daisybridge Bridge, to meet the coach for St. Becketsbury. I felt very sad, and almost felt inclined to murmur the lines from the verse book—

"When I left thy shores, O Naxos,
Not a tear in sorrow fell—
Not a sigh or faltered accent
Spoke my bosom's last farewell.

"Yet my heart sank chill within me,
And I waved a hand as cold,
When I thought thy shores, O Naxos,
I should never more behold!"

'Twas but an amphibious little corner of the earth; yet I felt grieved to leave it. Somehow, one doesn't like saying farewell to anything.

But I was to behold Naxos—Shrimpington-super-Mare—once more. I was there last Christmas. Came there, too, again in my way from Cæsarville to St. Becketsbury, but this time by design. Took the coach at Cæsarville on purpose, and alighted at Daiseybridge Hill, round whose once solitary ale-house a dozen neat new villas now clustered: heard that the farrier was a contractor on the Otaheitan Railway, and that I shouldn't know Shrimpington again, and walked manfully down the declivitous chalkway to the town of the extinct corporation.

Verily, I scarcely did know Shrimpington again. I had been away nine years. My heart, if not my hair, had grizzled and grown lean. There was no more shouting for the summer fruits or the harvest for me, no more singing among the vineyards and the treaders. I had served my apprenticeship to life, and had ground down my face to stern journeywork. The days and the years followed fair and foul, sunny and stormy, with a dreary exactitude, yet no two alike. Harvests of hope and vain imaginings had become a heap in the days of grief, and of desperate sorrow, and I had reaped the ears of experience with my arm.

So, three times three—the years of an hireling—had passed,

and I stood once more by the sounding sea, older, sadder, richer only in regrets. But Shrimpington-super-Mare, how had the nine years used her? Used her! They had petted, coddled, made much of, metamorphosed, turned her shrimp-like head with vanity. Hold me down while I write the words—Shrimpington-super-Mare had become a WATERING-PLACE! The Novena of Annuals had turned this salt-water chrysalis into the very gaudiest of butterflies. It appears that old Squire Gervoise of the Priory, a fox-hunting conservative, "new-fangled-invention"-hating landed gentleman, had died during the year following my departure from Shrimpington, and that his family had availed themselves of the circumstance to bury him. Then there came down from London, having previously sold out of one of her Majesty's lifeguard regiments, a bran new squire—Mr. Ibbetson Gervoise, who, to use his own vigorous locution, "went in" for improvement "like one o'clock." He was a tremendously tall young fellow, with a superabundance of animal spirits, the most liberal use of which he had made hitherto in the society of prize-fighters, horse-jockeys, and dog-fanciers; but the whim took him now—as I am delighted to say it takes many of our young nobles in the present day—to utilize his animal spirits in doing some sort of good everywhere about him, in the most rapid and muscular manner. He commenced by half pulling down the manor-house; but then, on the other hand, he pulled up Shrimpington wonderfully. Three-fourths of the tarred cabins had disappeared, and their place on the west cliff was supplied by a row of white houses—the very counterpart, in a spick and span new form, of Doctor Quinnington's up town, all with verandahs, bright green doors, and brighter green knockers, and dignified by the name of the Grand Parade. A Grand Parade at Shrimpington-super-Mare! *There were bathing-machines on the beach:* ladies' machines and gentlemen's machines. They were building a boat-house, assembly-rooms, and bazaar; Alured Ibbetson Gervoise, Esq., chairman of the committee. The milliner called herself *modiste* and mantle-maker, and had six young lady assistants, who wore crinoline and their hair *à la Eugénie.* There were four chemists, who sold nothing but doctors' stuff; and the

post-office was no longer at the grocer's, but had a little house to itself. The doctors had multiplied wonderfully. Old Doctor Quinnington, though he still resided in the place, and enjoyed a comfortable practice, was voted old-fashioned; and the crack physician was Doctor Toff, from London—the famous Doctor Toff, you know, who attended the Cochin-Chinese Ambassador, Fowlien Rooster, when he had the measles. There was a library on the Esplanade. The Esplanade! They were running a new pier out from the east cliff; at the two extremities of which it was proposed to place a flagstaff, a camera obscura, two real cannon, a summer-house, a photographic studio, and goodness knows what besides. Government was to be plagued and parliament petitioned to do something for the port, which was as muddy as ever, and slightly shunned by the visitors, and sanguine hopes were entertained by some of the town's-people—the town's-people!—of deposing the head-borough or the high-constable, whichever he may have been, and getting back—if they ever had one—a charter of incorporation, with a mayor, aldermen, town-councillors, and all the honours. The old church had gone quite out of date, and there was some thought of pulling it down. There was an Evangelical Episcopal chapel, and a High Church toyshop, intensely Puseyite, and full of ecclesiological playthings. There was a Baptist's meeting-house, and the Mormons, even, were reported to have a chapel in Mrs. Wigsby's first floor back—the tobacco and snuff shop. In place of the old, lazy, lounging, quiet, fishy inhabitants, was an anomalous population of bathing women, flymen—(there were flys with live horses)—donkeys, bath-chairs, foot-pages, nursery-maids, and watering-place dandies. Dandies at Shrimpington! There was a library and a music shop, with real harps and cabinet pianofortes glittering through the plate-glass windows. Miss Twigg no longer took day-scholars; her seminary was now a "Collegiate Institute;" and there were two other boarding-schools for young ladies in the suburbs. For Shrimpington had suburbs; vistas of villas, New Roads, Victoria Roads, London Roads, and what not. The wretched little outlying hamlet of Scaleywort, where, in my time, were but a beershop, a blacksmith's forge, and half-a-dozen

hovels, was now promoted to be Dunstanville, where, in Birchmore Crescent, Doctor Broomback saw his young friends after the vacations at Bamboo House: he combined hydropathic treatment with a liberal education, and a system of discipline based on moral suasion, and the sons of gentlemen only could be received. He sternly refused to take Burbidge, the actor's son, whereupon Burbidge sent him to Eton, where Doctor Goodford was delighted to receive him. In Caneington Grove, Mrs. Warmum had her preparatory school for young gentlemen. There was a French master and also an Italian master resident in Shrimpington; a teacher of the German language, who had lost a leg at the siege of Comorn; and a professor of the pianoforte and singing, who was supposed to be a marquis in his own country, and made desperate love to Miss Twigg. Monsieur Kitti, of the royal operas and the nobility's balls, came over from St. Becketsbury, and established himself as a professor of dancing and calisthenics. To cap and crown all these achievements, Doctor Toff had discovered that the old Mussel Well, which had existed time out of mind in Widow Skatesly's back garden, half-way between Shrimpington and Scaleywort, was a chalybeate spring, of great virtue in the treatment of almost every human ailment. It was saline, alkaline, ferruginous, all at once. People said that Doctor Toff purchased a lot of old keys and rusty barrel-hoops, and threw them down the well, to render the water nasty; be that as it may, Doctor Toff wrote a thin book, hot pressed, about the Mussel Spring of Shrimpington-super-Mare, which was published by Mr. Churchill, of Princes Street, Soho, London, and enthusiastically reviewed in the "Shrimpington Gazette and Fashionable Intelligencer," which Pybus, the printer, had recently started. They talked of a branch railway between St. Becketsbury and the new watering-place. They talked of erecting a theatre, a music hall, a museum; of erecting a statue to Squire Gervoise. They built an Elizabethan watchbox, brick with ragstone facings, for a vestry-hall. They built a commodious police-station, in lieu of the old cage behind the market. They defied the Pope of Rome on the platform, and in the columns of the "Shrimpington Gazette." They had a German band, and a

livery-stable keeper, who let out saddle-horses, on which young ladies rode in flowing habits, cavalier hats, doeskin trousers, and varnished boots with military heels and tiny spurs. The "Godwin's Head" was converted into a "first-class" hotel, built in the Italian style, and there were half-a-dozen more inns, and many more public-houses than were needed. Still Shrimpington hadn't a halfpenny worth of commerce beyond the contents of a few fishing boats. The major portion of the fish consumed came down from London, now. She produced nothing, manufactured nothing. Squire Gervoise, Doctor Toff, and Nine Years, had done it all; and had played the very dickens with Shrimpington-super-Mare.

And the few years—the few years that had gone before—how had they affected the watchmaker and jeweller's shop, No. 7 in the High Street, and Mr. Prawnby, the bald-headed proprietor thereof? Alas and alack! the times had been too swift for the old man—had swept him quite out of his quaint, lowly warehouse, with its heterogeneous contents. Barnett Lypscombe, silversmith and jeweller, by appointment to his Serene Excrescence the Grand Duke of Schaffskopfshausen-Sigmaringen, now reigned in his stead. Gorgeous cases of rings, jewelled watches, emerald brooches, diamond pins, blazed in the polished window front. There were race-cups and christening goblets, snuff-boxes and fasces of spoons, and forks of *vermeil* and of the king's and the fiddle pattern. But for all that, Mr. Barnett—whilom Barney—Lypscombe carried on the pawnbroking business with great activity and success through the back door in Shire Lane, round the corner.

Mr. Prawnby, now very old and broken, had quietly subsided into one of the few houses with the gable towards the street which remained in Shrimpington. He dwelt with an extremely deaf house-keeper, living upon a small annuity which he had purchased on selling his stock and business to Mr. Lypscombe—finding the Times and Steam too much for him. I discovered the old man in his retreat, and was pleased to find that he recognised me, and was as chatty as of yore. I stayed a whole week in Shrimpington, sternly repudiating, however, the quondam

"Godwin's Head," now the Sir Bevois Hotel; and put up at the "Kings and Key," which was yet an old-fashioned house; and where I and the worthy Prawnby smoked innumerable pipes, and had more than one glass of the famous "civil" beer of Shrimpington-super-Mare.

BOW STREET POLICE COURT.

THE observant traveller through this, our new Nineveh, has ample materials for research spread before him (if he choose but to gaze) in the divers courts for the administration of justice in the Metropolis. Hoping, as I most sincerely do, that he may not, and may never, have anything to do with law or lawyers, he may yet add most considerably to his stock of street philosophy by perambulating diligently, and in an inquiring spirit, the various haunts of Nemesis—both civil and criminal. And in very nasty nooks and corners does Nemesis ofttimes dwell. Now arrayed in all the splendour of scarlet robes, crimson covered benches, a fully bewigged bar, carved ceiling, and gothic doorways;—her mandates interpreted by the Lord High Procrastinator Nimos, the Lord Chief Guibbler Arachus, or the Puisne Baron Rhadamanthus; she is presently found lurking in a miserable little County Court (I wish they would make my friend Sansbrief a County Court Judge), where her elucidator is "His Honour," adjudicating between Jones and Tompkins upon the disputed question of a trading bill. Her judges stalk to-day solemnly through Westminster Hall, purse and mace bearers preceding, and ladies admiring. To-morrow these same judges are couching in obscure little dirty windowed dusty dens, called "Judges' Chambers," where law attorneys' clerks fight for their lordships' initials, and careworn suitors swear not loud but deep, and glib solicitors' retainers swear not deep but loud, as they gabble through their affidavits, and vow their contents are true—"So help them God; a guinea to pay."

Yes, Justice is ubiquitous. You wander about the purlieus of Red Lion Square, and you stumble upon the shabby Sheriffs' Court. You have a ticket to view the House of Lords, and

Justice (in the shape of one Law Lord asleep, another twiddling his thumbs, and a third reading the *Times*) passes upon you, and proceeds to settle the conflicting claim of Bommajee Bapojee, of Cawnpoor, against Kappogee Rummajee, of Mearut. Go, purchase a new velvet mantle for the adored one of your heart in St. Paul's Churchyard, and accommodating Justice (incarnated, for the nonce, in a red-nosed man with a white apron) pounces upon you with an offer of a marriage licence in Doctors' Commons, hard by; in the which, should you enter, you will also find worm-eaten Prerogative Justice ready to show you the last will and testament by which your grandfather disinherited you; Arches Justice, anxious (for a thousand pounds consideration) to divorce you from the wife of your bosom, and publish all your little family affairs in "interrogatories," "libels," and "replications;" Nautical Justice embodied by some "jolly young waterman," *alias* white headed old gentleman in scarlet and white fur, gravely doubting where the *Nancy* ran into the *Emma*, or *vice versâ*, but unanimously resolving that nobody was to have any salvage, but that Justice must have her costs; and, lastly, Ecclesiastical Justice, citing the Rev. Giles Coverhack, for his "soul's health," to show cause why he smoked pipes at the "Seven Bells" with Skeggs the tinker, or was addicted to drinking gin and water in the vestry. Wherever we go, Justice, to use a somewhat vulgar term, is "down upon us." The smell of Justice (and hemp) mingles with the odour of the viands at the boiled beef shop in the Old Bailey. If you break your leg, and are taken to King's College Hospital, Justice hustles your stretcher under the guise of a breathless messenger of the Insolvent Court. Take a short cut to the Royal Exchange, and your cab wheel will be locked by those of another cab bound for the Court of Bankruptcy. Dine with the Lord Mayor, and he has just come up from the justice room. Lunch with the Sheriff, and he has just been to pay a visit to the woman who is to be hanged next Monday. It is a proud thing for an Englishman to think that wherever he turns his steps, his eyes, his thoughts even, Law and Justice are there to watch over him and protect him; that within a circle of a dozen yards walk the

policeman to take him into custody, the attorney to sue him, the broker to "sell him up," the bailiff to "nab him;" that, perchance, that respectable looking man in black, yonder, may be the terrible Mr. Calcraft himself, ready to hang him "comfortably," should he need it, and to sell his clothes afterwards to Madame Tassaud. *O Lege!*

Which brings me to Bow Street and Bow Street Police Court, the head quarters of Criminal Justice (of the sharp and summary sort) in London. The authorities who fixed upon the sites of the different metropolitan police courts were philosophers and men of the world. Unlike the French, who have conglomerated all their police tribunals in one building, the Palais de Justice (for the *bureaux* of the *Commissaire de Police* cannot rank as courts), our wise lawgivers have placed Justice's shaving shop (if I may use so irreverent a term) in the immediate centres of the neighbourhoods where there are most customers requiring to be shaved. The bane and antidote are close together, *ibi apis ubi mel.* Where fraud and robbery, violence, drunkenness, and profligacy are, there also is the magistrate—the dreaded "beak"—to examine and to punish. Criminal Justice is on tap—"to be drunk on the premises" in every crowded neighbourhood; and from crowded courts and noisome alleys roundabout, come (very often much against their will) numerous customers to drink, drink deeply, too, of Justice's Entire.

Everybody knows the antecedents of that partly theatrical, partly legal, partly market-gardening, partly historical thoroughfare—Bow Street. Besides, I am writing of the thing of to-day, and not of those gone by, so I shall not trouble you with antiquarian anecdotes (cribbed from Hone, Peter Cunningham, or "Esmond") respecting Lord Mohun, Sir George Etherege, Sir Charles Sedley, and the other worthies, or unworthies, who have at different periods made Bow Street famous. It does not matter to us, now, how many times Covent Garden Theatre has been burnt down, or how many managers burnt their fingers in it when it was built up again. I cannot even venture to descant upon the old watch houses and police offices in Bow Street; of Townshend and his red waistcoated "runners;" of courteous

Barrington and daring Sixteen-stringed Jack; of the fierce patrol, and the imbecile paralytic old watchmen; of all the thieves and murderers posting red hot to the gallows, who have made Bow Street the last stage but one upon that dismal route. Our business of to-day is with the Bow Street of 1853—of this Monday morning in November; so we cannot do better than follow Inspector Manickel, who is just crossing the road with the charge sheet under his arm; and, entering with him, see what is going on in the court.

Inspector Manickel has been up all night, and remarkably fresh, rosy, and well shaven he looks, considering. Hour by hour he has sat at his desk, under the hot flickering gas, pouring over his charge books, unconcernedly receiving and registering all descriptions of stolen and detained property—from diamond rings and gold watches to baskets of fresh herrings and broken peg tops. With that calm, imperturbable, business-like face of his has he looked and listened to all the charges against the miserable wretches placed in the little dock before his window—to the maudlin declaration of the tipsy "gentleman" that he is "all right;" to the drunken frenzy of the gin-maddened labourer; to the blasphemous incoherencies of the houseless, friendless, nameless night-walker; to the sullen defiance of the burglar; the cool assurance of the swell-mobsman; the half lachrymose, half impudent asseverations of innocence of the boy pickpocket; the weary, feeble, moan of being "cold and hungry" of the wretched tramping mother who has just been repulsed by the relieving officer. All these prisoners has Inspector Manickel looked at and listened to. Likewise to the clumsy explanations of obtuse policemen young in the force, and to the glib statements of the practised "peelers." All this has Inspector Manickel done to the music of the dully ticking clock, the echoing boots of his subordinate, the flaring buzz of the gas, and the scratching of the pen of his serjeant secretary. And hour by hour has this charge sheet been growing, swelling into a chronicle of crime; and in what should be the silence of the night season when deep sleep falleth upon man, he, Thomas Manickel, has heard such tales as might make the hairs of his flesh stand up.

But he is an Inspector of the Z Division; and the sum of his remarks to the majority of the harrowing tales has been a simple "Take him away;" after which you hear more boots echoing over the stones, and a key turn, and a door clang to. I think though that the tramping mother had some bread and hot coffee given her, for all the Inspector's imperturbability, and her babe did not die of starvation that night. Whether Inspector Manickel ever keeps a glass of anything warm and comfortable under that inscrutable desk of his, I know not; but I am sure that he deserves it; and that when he unbuttons that tight coat, and loosens that uncomfortable stock this afternoon, he will have a perfect right to consider himself as one of those who are especially expected by the Nelsons of Scotland Yard to do their duty, and who have done it well.

Come into court. Not yet though, for it is barely ten o'clock, and the magistrate who sits this morning has not yet arrived. We traverse a dirty corridor, where sit on benches those indescribably dingy, faded, mouldy people, who *will* sit on benches—and sit for hours—at every public place where there are benches to sit upon. In this corridor lounge also policemen of all divisions and all numbers, accusers and witnesses in various cases. The A Division cases are to be taken first; they have a priority of hearing before the magistrate,—that being one of the privileges of that aristocratic section of the police force; and a considerable number of A's are here this Monday morning; some bearing huge bundles of stolen property, to be produced in evidence or identified; some spruce and dapper, merely there to give some gentleman who is in "trouble" a "character"—generally an exceedingly bad one, as far as regards bygone charges and convictions. Then there are B's and C's, and of course a majority of the alphabetical letter—F, I think, in whose beat is Bow Street. Skulking, ill-looking fellows, relatives, "pals," or "mates" of prisoners, hang about scowling at the policemen, who regard them in turn with shrewd warning looks. Ladies and gentlemen who having assumed an undue allowance of liquor over-night, have thereby become "drunk and disorderly," or drunk and incapable," and have been taken to the station-house, but growing subse-

quently semi-sober have been released on bail, pace also this corridor with perturbed and nervous looks. They are very well dressed, and very clean and quiet, and very unlike the noisy, muddy, broken-hatted roysterers they were last night. But for their pale cheeks and blood-shot eyes, you would not think they had anything in common with the ragged, deboshed bacchanalians, who, being disorderly or incapable all night, have not been released, or have not been able to procure bail. They are all very sorry for what they have done, now,—very penitent indeed; very anxious to "square" the policeman who has taken their "case in charge," *i.e.*, who picked them out of the gutter. They are painfully dubious, as to what crimes they have committed over-night, and thereby dread fearfully their appearance before the magistrate, not knowing but that stern policeman X may get up in the witness box and depose that they had assaulted ten licensed victuallers, kicked twelve police constables, and kissed nineteen "respectable married women," besides ringing bells, and stealing knockers, and breaking windows innumerable; whereupon the magistrate will gravely remark that the case is far too serious to be met by a fine, and will send them to prison and hard labour for indefinite periods.

Stand on one side: the court will open in a moment. Room there for dapper solicitors ready to prove their clients (in the dock) whiter than the driven snow. Room for little boys with blue bags containing proofs of innocence. Room for the urbane chief clerk with his resplendent whiskers, who bustles about from one mercurial office to another, and is anxious to learn from some subordinate official if there are many more "Acts of Parliament." Who the deuce wants more Acts of Parliament? I should like to know. Stay, we can step aside here for a moment, and by an exercise of "open sesame," known only to the initiated, enter into the prisoners' waiting-room. A hard-featured, elderly policeman guards the entrance; another, as stern but younger, sits writing something (goodness knows what, but wherever justice is concerned there is sure to be an expenditure of pen and ink and foolscap) at a little desk; and a thin official guards the entrance to a little corridor or rather cupboard, leading into the court

itself. The waiting room is a bare plain chamber enough; benches are ranged round it, and on them, under the supervision of policemen, cower or crouch or sit doggedly the prisoners; brazen-faced women, bull-necked ruffianly men, wan shivering girls, and wretched street boys—children with old men's faces—in all their hideous panoply of matted hair, and "looped and windowed raggedness," of festered dirt-encrusted feet, and long lean picking and stealing hands. One gigantic culprit, whose hang-dog countenance has been beaten into a very rainbow of bruises, probably in some savage encounter with the police, and who has been so violent, subsequently, as to render the application of a pair of handcuffs to his wrists necessary, begs a drink of water. He is "werry dry:"—probably. A policeman hands him a large earthenware jug of water, which he raises to his lips with his manicled hands and drinks deeply from. I seem to descry in the rascal's eye, as he does so, an almost irrepressible longing to hurl the water, jug and all, at the head of the official, or at that of anybody, so that he might be enabled to do some mischief. He puts the missive down, however, with a sulky gulp, and just then, the magistrate having arrived and taken his seat, I pass through the little cupboard corridor into open court.

The appearance of this, the Chief Police Tribunal in the metropolis, is anything but imposing. Indeed, were I to say that it was a trifle mean, a thought shabby, a shade villanous in odour (ugh! that stifling pent-up crowd at back), I should not be very far from the truth. The Royal Arms are above the magistrate's head; certainly, the bench is a bench as benches go; there is a bulky collection of law books on the tables, and the chief clerk's whiskers are certainly monuments of justice tempered with mercy. But there is a want of dignity, of fitness, of the decent splendour in fact, that should be associated with a court where the Queen's Justice is administered in the Queen's name. The place is a hybrid now, between a railway booking office and one of the old courts of requests. I certainly do not wish for police courts where the magistrates sat on velvet cushions, and wore ermine and a cocked hat, or where the prisoner was accommodated with an arm chair and a footstool, and had two lictors with their fasces on

either side of him ; still, I think, while we are wasting yard after yard, furlong after furlong, tesselated pavements, and mullioned walls, and groined ceilings, for useless antechambers and corridors leading to nowhere, about our new Palace at Westminster, we might provide courts for our police magistrates a little superior to the shabby nooks and corners they inhabit now.

Touching the exact distribution of the various departments of the police court, Bow Street, I need not be minutely topographical. You may inform yourself on that head, far better than you could do from any descriptive detail of mine, from Mr. Haswell's cartoon of the interior of the court hereto appended. I need only remark, that the gentleman under the Royal Arms is the magistrate ; that the gentleman facing him, in the dock, is the prisoner ; that to the magistrate's right is the witness-box, and to his left the reporters' box ; and that beneath him, between his desk and the dock, is the clerk's table and that set aside for solicitors and counsel.

The night charges are just on. One by one are brought up the drunk and disorderlies, the drunk and incapables, the poor cyprians who having done nothing particular have been taken into custody for nothing particular by the police, while business was slack, and to keep their hand in I presume. One by one the accusing policemen ascend the witness-box, and a burly usher administers the oath, on a very greasy, dog-eared Testament. Then are grim damnatory legends poured into the magistrate's ear of how Brown was "werry intoxicated" and used "dreffel language, your wushup ;" how Jones attempted to move a lamp-post on the ground that it was his own private and personal property ; how it took seven officers to master Robinson, the dissipated pork butcher of Snaggs Market, maddened by drink ; how Mrs. Smith imbibed so much at the "Dog and Duck," that her transportation to the station-house on a wheelbarrow was rendered necessary ; how Miss Priscilla Howard of "Over the Water," scratched the face, tore the bonnet off, and otherwise maltreated Miss Selina Talbot of Exeter Street ; how Sharks Buff, alias "Shirtless Charley," was detected in the heinous crime of sleeping in the open air against the statute in that case made

and provided; how John Ropes, a retainer of Messrs. Screwdown and Truttes, the eminent funeral furnishers, returning from a "black job," and driving one of his employers' hearses, drove, through an excess of gin, into an open sewer, whereby his horse (much injured) was conveyed to the green-yard, and himself to the lock-up. The worthy magistrate (a very quiet, unassuming gentleman to look at), but a scholar, a gentleman, and a practised lawyer for all that, listens calmly to each case, occasionally raising his eye-glass and scrutinising the delinquents, while the chief clerk inquires names and ages, and takes notes in a very unconcerned and business-like manner. As for the prisoners, some of them look bold and defiant, some abashed and sheepfaced. Their accounts are soon settled. The majority are allowed to go "this time;" a few are fined five and ten shillings apiece; and one gent, who has been exceedingly obstreperous over night, has stolen several knockers, and evinced a special desire to throttle B 96, is mulcted in the sum of forty shillings to our Sovereign Lady the Queen. By the way, I wonder where our Sovereign Lady gets these little bacchanalian *pecuniæ*, and what she does with them when she gets them. I can imagine her investing them in the purchase of George Cruickshank's fairy temperance tracts for the use of the Prince of Wales.

To the night charges succeed a little parish business. Mr. Grimes, the relieving officer of the parish of St. Bumptious, attends to complain of some alleged misrepresentation of the "Times" reporter, touching a little cruelty and heartlessness, and brutal apathy to a casual pauper, of which he had been accused. He cannot be made to see why paupers *will* die on door steps, when they are foodless and houseless. The worthy magistrate speaks rather sharply to Mr. Grimes, and rather strongly, and tells him some home truths in some home language; and Mr. Grimes departs dissatisfied and grumbling. About this time commences the acknowledgment on the part of the magistrate (for the benefit of the press and public, and the satisfaction of the donors) of sundry enclosures of cash, from five-pound notes to postage stamps, for the poor-box. The poor-box history of a police court is enough to make the most virulent cynic mollified with human

nature. Faith, hope, and charity, the strongest, the cheerfullest, the purest, shine like stars through the modest disguise of the benevolent initials—Faith in the discretion and mercy-tempered justice of the magistrate; hope that tears may be dried, and widows relieved, and orphans comforted, by the timely relief of the poor-box; charity is the abnegation of self-praise or vicarious laudation, the absence from trumpet-blowing and sitting in high places, the general repudiation of pharisaical feeling in the generous preservation of the anonymous. I don't care about the Cariboo Indians; I don't care about the Howler Wowler Mission; I protest against the subscription for circulating "Cruden's Concordance" in Tee-loo-goo. I dare say that the Dowager Lady Gambroon, and the Rev. Doctor Pantologos, and the Rev. Chives Shallot are sincere in subscribing to and preaching for these desirable objects; but I do think that there is ten times more real, true, unaffected charity in the unassuming halves of five-pound notes and crownsworth of postage stamps of "Alpha" or "X.Y.Z." Their names may be unkown here, sir; but they are written far away, far above, in a certain ledger in which the entries are imperishable. True men of business are they for their alms-giving. They invest their savings in the bank of mercy, and there is a safe dividend—yea, and a bonus guarranteed to them in Heaven.

Now commences the more serious business of the day. The ruffian who has assaulted the police, has *his* little affair settled, and, several former convictions being preferred against him, it is intimated that he will have to pass the three months next ensuing upon the salubrious but fatiguing treadmill. He receives the sentence with an appalling outbreak of rage and blasphemy, and, after making an ineffectual effort to bite off the gaoler's nose, is removed struggling and yelling. Several pickpocketing cases follow: then a select batch of strapping young women are brought up charged with window-smashing, bad language-using, and general riotous behaviour in an Union Workhouse. They are sentenced to divers terms of imprisonment, and as they are removed scatter the choicest flowers of Billingsgate over the officials and auditory. One special virago endeavours to cast her shoe at the head of the magistrate, whom she designates an "old bloke."

A Cab Case.—Badge 9,999 is summoned by a nervous-looking

old gentleman in a white hat and buff waistcoat, for overcharging him, abusing him, being drunk, refusing to show him his badge or give him a ticket; in short, for committing an almost endless series of offences under Mr. Fitzroy's Act. Mr. Lambswool, the plaintiff, arrived a day or so previous at the railway terminus in Shoreditch, from Lowestoft. Upon his arrival in in London he placed himself and luggage under the care of Thomas Buck, badge 9,999, and desired to be driven to the "Flower Pot" in Bishopsgate Street. The conscientious Buck drove his fare a pleasant jaunt about Hoxton and Kingsland, and eventually landing him at the "Flower Pot," demanded three shillings as his fare, sixpence for waiting (*i.e.*, while Mr. Lambswool descended from his vehicle to purchase a penny bun), and one and sixpence for three separate parcels, consisting of a sandwich-box, a worsted comforter, and a copy of "Uncle Tom." His claim being demurred to, Mr. Buck threw the articles in question violently on the pavement, made use of abusive, derisive, and defamatory language, requested to know whether Mr. Lambswool considered himself to be a gentleman; adding his own personal conviction that he was not, but rather a "sweep," a "duffer," a "shoful," and a "moucher," and ultimately challenged him to fight for any amount. Being requested to show his badge, he, after much pressing, and several refusals, exhibited it upside down—it thereby appearing as 6,666. Being importuned for a ticket, he at length produced one numbered 4,206. To these manifold and accumulated accusations, Mr. Buck pleads "Not Guilty;" but the charge being clearly brought home to him, and Mr. Lambswool further deposing that defendant's wife and four small children had waited on him that morning with an acknowledgment of Mr. Buck's guilt and entreaties for mercy, (said wife being defendant's *maitresse en titre*, and said children borrowed from another cabman's wife,) a decision is come to in Mr. Buck's case, which leads to his conveyance in the afternoon, and in Her Majesty's van, to the House of Correction; there to dwell for two months, not exactly—

"In adamantine chains and penal fire,"

but in oakum picking and water-gruel.

ANOTHER CAB CASE.—Jeremiah Downey, badge 1,160, sum-

mons the Honourable Frederick Augustus Ambergris, of the Admiralty, to show cause why he should not pay him eighteenpence. Augustus Frederick engaged defendant's cab at the Horse Guards, and wished to be "dwiven to Belgwave Square." On the road he met the cabs, horses, and persons of sundry of his acquaintances, notably Captain Heelball of the Blues; Mr. Skey Zerubbabel of Jermyn Street, bill discounter, who entreated him sorely on the subject of a certain grey horse, a fast trotter, and a Venus by Titian; and Mademoiselle Eulalie of the French Theatre, into whose brougham, indeed, he stepped, and remained there some ten minutes. Upon his arrival in "Belgrave Square," Augustus Frederick tendered sixpence in payment of his fare. The cautious Downey declined to take it, demanding eighteenpence, and *hinc illæ lachrymæ*—hence the summons. I need scarcely say that the accomplished Augustus Frederick is cast in the amount claimed, and that the successful Downey drives away triumphantly with the eighteenpence, and the additional sum which has been awarded hin for expenses and loss of time.

From these and various other cases which succeed each other in the course of the day, I am enabled to form a quiet opinion that pretty nearly every social question is about as broad as it is long; that it is possible to find six very abusive, drunken, extortionate cabmen, and half-a-dozen very stingy, imperious, unjust fares. Some quiet convictions of the same nature force themselves upon me when I see a forbidding ruffian punished, and deservedly punished, for maiming, mutilating, kicking, biting, and bruising his wife; and when the very next case, a woman, whose husband is already in prison for assaulting her, is brought up for flogging a sickly puny girl half to death, with the buckle-end of a strap; when, towards the conclusion of the sitting, Mrs. Macnutty of Drury Court, applies to have Mrs. Groggerly of Wych Street bound over to keep the peace, on the ground that she has threatened to "dash her brains out," and is on cross-examination compelled to admit that she has herself threatened to pour boiling water over Mrs. Groggerly, to tear her eyes out, and "have her blood."

At length the *seance* comes to a termination. There are no

more cases to be heard; the magistrate retires; the crowd gradually disperses; the sentenced prisoners are removed in the van, and Bow Street Police Court is left to solitude and silence, to the shadows of departed detectives, and the ghosts of prisoners fully committed, and hanged, or transported years ago.

SLOW COACHES.

THE age we live in will not tolerate Slow Coaches. The age insists upon rapidity in its locomotion, and "Slow coach" has become a term of derision.

I often endeavour—remembering many slow coaches that have disappeared in my brief span, and carrying the knowledge, obtained from books, of many more—to ascertain how many chariots, two-wheelers and four-wheelers, yet linger and deserve the uncomplimentary epithets of "slow coaches." On every succeeding Derby Day some few slow coaches still make their appearance among the tearing barouches, the skurrying mail-phaetons, the easy-gliding broughams, and the mountainous, yet mobile, four-in-hands, full of irresistible impetus—the Life Guards, the Milhaud cuirassiers of the coaching world. There is never a stoppage at Kennington Common or at Cheam Gate but the van of some incorrigibly Conservative old slow coach appears—a four-wheeler generally, with hardened horses, bent on having their own way, and a perverse driver who *won't* adapt himself to circumstances, and who *will* look upon the Derby of 1860 as the immediate successor to the Derby of 1830, when he first drove to the pleasant Downs of Epsom. Such obstinate men are, curiously enough, often theoretically right in their charioteering, and adhere inflexibly to the rule of the road. What is the rule of the road? It has explicit existence and cannot be termed *Lex non scripta*, for it has been codified in a stanza; and a late celebrated barrister owed, it is said, much of his success in getting verdicts in running-down cases, to his dexterity in discovering the exact moment when the jury's ears might be tickled with a poetical quotation, and the promptitude with which he gave them the vehicular dictum:

The Rule of the Road is as plain as one's hand—
T' explain it I need not be long:
If you keep to the left you are sure to be right;
If you keep to the right you are wrong.

Shrewd attorneys' and barristers' clerks in court could always tell, at a certain stage of the running-down case, and from a peculiar twitching about the facial muscles of the advocate, when the famous rule was coming. The jury always liked it, and grinned in their box. The bench liked it. Baron Owlet, though he had heard the wise saw a hundred times before, used to murmur the doggrel, with a pleased chuckle, after the speaker. Wheeler, the puisne judge, invariably entered the Rule of the Road in his notes, as a modern instance. It is said that Mr. Jehu, K.C., would never have been Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, but for the Rule of the Road.

When the Derby week is over, the slow coaches disappear, to turn up, sometimes it may be, at small provincial race-courses; but the most extensive resuscitation of slow coaches within my remembrance was on an occasion within the last ten years, when the London cabmen struck for fares, and when the recesses of the remotest livery-stables, and the penetralia of the most antediluvian coach-houses were rummaged for vehicles to replace the recalcitrant Hansoms and four-wheelers. It is believed that the celebrated "one-horse shay," concerning whose trip to Brighton the popular comic song was written, made its appearance on the eventful morning of the strike. Flies, glass-coaches, sociables, yellow post-chaises, dennets, stanhopes, désobligeantes, pill-boxes, landaus, and curricles of weird and ghostly look, of sad and old-world form, and driven by ancient men of sour mien and costume out of date, fretted through the wondering streets. Men whispered that Queen Anne was not dead, after all; that Frederick Barbarossa had awakened from his century sleep among the Hartz mountains, and, finding his beard grown through the table, had cried, "It is time!" and that Rip van Winkle had come down from his game of ninepins with the Dutch slow coaches of the Schuylkills. There were rumours afloat, that Cinderella's pumpkin carriage had been seen in Regent Street; that the wild

Prince of Wales had driven Perdita Robinson on a high perch round the Ring in Hyde Park; that Peagreen Haines and Romeo Coates had reappeared, conducting curricles in the shape of cockle-shells; that the Exeter flying coach, and the York Icarus, which took six days to perform their journeys, were plying between Sloane Street and the Bank; and that, from the "Coach and Horses" tavern in Conduit Street, was seen to start a phantom GIG, the immortal emblem of human respectability, drawn by a spectral horse, and containing some ghostly pork-chops and the top-booted apparition of Thurtell, on his way to Gill's Hill Lane, to murder that Mr. William Weare of the ballad, who dwelt in Lyon's Inn. The cabmen's strike was soon over, however, and the slow coaches disappeared as suddenly and as strangely as they had come.

To discover slow coaches, few methods are more efficacious than to get well blocked up in Fleet Street or Cheapside—the facilities for carrying this into effect are most obligingly placed at your disposal by the corporation—and to survey the vehicular entanglement, from the knifeboard of an omnibus, or from over the apron of a Hansom's cab. Of course the fast—when the drivers have a reasonable chance of fastness—predominate. Light carts, spring vans, powerful railway waggons, broughams and clarences with patent axles and noiseless wheels, parcels delivery carts, tradesmen's carts, dog carts, and butchers' carts with trotting ponies, even costermongers' shallows of which the donkey-steeds would move their little legs rapidly had they a clear stage and no favour in Whitechapel or in Tottenham Court Road—tilburies, and phaetons, and chariots and tax-carts, and basket-chaises: all these tell of the unmistakeable modern appetite for speed. Even the prisoners' van is no longer a slow coach; and once beyond Finsbury Square, that great black, shining felony-box moves with a ponderous swiftness Hollowaywards. But there is yet an admixture of slow coaches among the more rapid craft. There is that inevitable young member of the commercial aristocracy who *will* drive tandem to his wholesale haberdashery warehouse in Gutter Lane, who is unmoved by the taunts and threats of indignant cabmen and omnibus drivers, and who, so long as

he persists in backing when he should advance, driving sideways when he should drive ahead, and wearing an eye-glass, and so long as he doesn't know what to do with his wheeler, and isn't at all certain about his leader, will remain a hopeless and intolerable slow coach. I see the sad-coloured fly with the jolting windows and the brass-door handle viciously wrenched awry, drawn by the scraggy horse with the switch-tail, and driven by the methodical man in the drab gaiters and the Berlin gloves: which fly belongs of course to the ill-tempered old lady who takes her niece to live with her for charity, and starves and beats her—always for charity's sake—and who is going to the Bank to draw her dividends. At the slackest part of the driving day, and be the road ever so clear, the sad-coloured fly never moves but in a dully-plodding manner; and if ever a passing cabman happens to flick his whip against the window-pane, down comes that protecting screen, and the ill-tempered old lady puts her morose old head out and screams after the cabman that he is a villain, and that she will have him tried at the Old Bailey. I see the great, dark, comfortable, heavy hammerclothed, double-seated family carriage, the very weight of the heraldic bearings on whose panels would be sufficient to make it a slow coach, and which contains eminent bankeresses proposing to call in Lombard Street and confer with their eminent banker-spouses, concerning truffles and pineapples, ere they return to Roehampton for the great dinner of the evening. I see the goods-waggons full of bales and barrels, which must remain slow coaches till the end of the chapter, and which I sincerely wish were all underground—not dead, but buried, many fathoms deep, out of the way of people who have business to transact, and jogging along a comfortable subterranean railway. Then I am aware of those minor slow coaches, waifs and strays of laggard driving, that *will* drift among the screws and paddle-wheel steamers of modern vehicularity. Timid old maids drive blind ponies with distressing caution; farmers' wives from Bow, Tottenham, Edmonton, and Brentford—places that you might imagine to be quite close to London, but which are in reality twenty thousand miles away from the metropolis—jolt heavily and draggingly along in old-fashioned chaise-carts.

Superannuated tradesmen, in rusty traps drawn by grave fat cobs that will never win the Cesarewitch, are the slowest of the slow. They have nothing to do; and don't see the use of being in a hurry. The washerwomen's carts make no secret at all about being slow coaches. In addition to having to stop at every sixth door or so to take in linen, Monday, the great opening day of laundresses, is a far more jocund and festive season to those laborious persons who blanch our under-garments, than you might imagine. On Monday Mrs. Wrench, of Clapham, meets Mrs. Boyler, of Fulham Bridge, on the road. Mrs. Copperblue, of Turnham Green, exchanges the quotations of the prices of articles per dozen with Mrs. Starcher, from Chelsea. The superb Mrs. Minglemangle, who "does" for so many of the aristocracy, passes by her rival Mrs. Hangemout, who washes for the very best of the West End clubs, with ineffable red-faced disdain. The washerwomen's carts are always stopping at the corners of streets where licensed victuallers call the attention of the public to their neat wines and sparkling ales. I like to see lordly Mrs. Toweller sitting in her comfortable cart, monarch of all she surveys, plump and ruddy among the clothes-baskets with their heaps of linen covered with distended tablecloths, like snow-white apple-pies. Jolly Jack Toweller, the husband, drives. When off duty, he does gardening jobs for a gentleman at Hammersmith, who is benevolent, but is touched in his head, and *will* paint his geraniums pea-green when the gardener is away. I like to see this social washerman alight, enter the hostelry, and anon emerge, bearing the glass of sparkling ale, or, perchance, the "drop of comfort," for his strong-armed missus. Great joking then takes place, and politics and scandal—mainly bearing on the wash-tub and the ironing-board—are discussed.

The hackney-coach! It is a grave error to suppose that the musty old slow coach of our youth, with the sham heraldry, the straw carpet, and the spikes behind, is extinct. From the stands, the hackney-coach has indeed vanished—has not the waterman, with his low-crowned hat and his perpetually counterbalancing water-buckets, himself disappeared, and been replaced by an officer in uniform?—but the hackney-coach is yet to be met with

at railway termini, and plies quietly for the accommodation of large families with much luggage, coming to town from the midland counties. The hackney-coach takes them back again, also, to the terminus, when their trip is at an end; at least, so I conjecture from the appearance of one of these antiquated caravans in a quiet street in which I lived some two summers since, and which (this caravan) conveyed away one father, one mother, one grandmother (aged), a few adult sons and daughters, a tribe of ruddy children, a confidential housekeeper (likewise aged), a stout housemaid, a few tons of luggage, a shaggy dog, and a jackdaw in a wicker basket. Some time was necessarily occupied in stowing these impedimenta in the roomy old slow coach; although I entertain not the slightest doubt of its capacity to have held besides, a chest of drawers, and a young elephant. As I tranquilly surveyed the scene from an upper casement opposite, the coachman, catching my eye, or rather the lens of my pocket-glass, produced a small card from his pocket, made signs of tendering it to me, pointed to his bony steeds (which were eating their nose-bags), wagged his head violently, and stamped his foot, to express an idea of their surprising bone, mettle, and speed. I was amused at the thought that he should take me for a man who looked as though he wanted a hackney-coach, and sent Hannah down for the card. It looked, on closer inspection, remarkably like a pawnbroker's duplicate, and bore on one side the number, and on the other the owner's address, in a street somewhere off the Blackfriars Road: it contained, moreover, a neat reference to glass-coaches for wedding parties. I think the courteous charioteer must have been the owner of hackney-carriage 9063; and I remark that the majority of the drivers of these rare vehicles look like the proprietors thereof. They are staid, grave men of subdued mien, clad in sleeved waitcoats and mid-calf boots, are generally advanced in years, and would decidedly have been hired by Sir Roger de Coverley when he drove forth to take the air with Mr. Spectator. They wear silver watch-chains, and have a rate-paying expression of countenance. I seek in vain for the old jarvey with his many-caped Benjamin; the fierce, loud, restless, horse-lacerating, passenger-bullying ruffian of

twenty-five years ago; with his unblushing audacity of extortion and his astounding volubility of abusive slang. There is a word-picture of one of these fellows in a song to the old burden of "Tamaroo"—a picture to me positively terrific:

Ben was a hackney-coachman bold:
"Jarvey! jarvey!" "Here I am, yer honour!"
Ben was a hackney-coachman bold,
Tamaroo!
How he'd swear, and how he'd drive!
Number three hundred and sixty-five!
With a right fol loddle oddle, heigh, gee woa!

This is dreadful: this delineation of a hackney-coachman, in all his boldness and hardened ribaldry, swearing and driving, and yelling "Tamaroo" all the way.

Splendour, nobility, and even royalty, have not yet done shaking hands with slow coaches: they come out occasionally in St. James's Street on drawing-room days, covered with gold and varnish, and filled with antique carmined dowagers with slow nodding plumes: also with purblind peers and generals. Our good Queen gets rid of the slow coach incubus whenever she has a chance. See her dashing in the open carriage with the scarlet outriders towards Ascot Race-course, and hear the countless thousands peal out their great joyful shout as she and her nobles emerge from the Long Walk, and the carriage slackens its pace, and the horses, champing in their constrained slowness, move along the velvet sward. See the simple carriage that holds Royalty, swiftly gliding to theatre or opera. At home, at Osborne, and at Balmoral, we are told the Queen drives a little basket pony-chaise; but Routine must have its rights, and the slow coacheries of our glorious constitution are not to be trifled with. So, once or twice a week, her Majesty, and her Masters of the Horse and Mistresses of the Robes, are compelled to enter that huge gilded gingerbread and glass-case of a waggon, with the squat coachman, and the squat horses—the old original Absurdity and Monstrosity, with the Roman helmets, and the fasces, and the palm-trees, and the panels painted by Cipriani over Thornhill, and Faith, Hope, and Charity, Gog, Magog, and the

Emperor Heliogabalus into the bargain for aught I know, sprawling about a golden Noah's Ark. How Queen Victoria must hate the state carriage! How the Mistress of the Robes must abhor it, and the Master of the Horse shake his fist at it, when he makes a tour of inspection through the Royal Stables! Stop: perhaps they all like it. How do we know? Lord Chamberlain, perchance, is fond of walking backwards. I think, myself, that I could manage to wear a gold robe and a cocked hat, or lawn sleeves and a wig like a birds'-nest—if I were well paid for it.

The Lord Mayor of London enjoys also the possession of a state slow-coach, elaborately carved and gilt, and equally resembling a twelfth-cake and a car of Juggernaut. The civic state carriage has cost some thousands of pounds sterling in its time, and its maintenance in a decent state of repair yet involves, I believe, the annual expenditure of a considerable sum of money. Its interior is, I am afraid, inevitably affected with dry rot; but the coach is, of course, a great civic institution, and the corporation could no more get on without its state carriage than without the Mace and the Sword Bearers, the Guildhall Giants and the City Marshal. I wonder whether it will ever be found possible to get on without the corporation itself! This is a levelling age. The barge is gone, the man in brass is gone. I tremble for the state carriage.

The Speaker of the House of Commons has *his* slow coach, an angular affair very far gone in gold-leaf; but the right honourable gentleman, to his great good fortune, is very rarely seen in it. There is another slow coach, too, connected with the State, to which—but I have no space—I might advert in detail. I mean that appalling combination of four-post bestead, railway-truck, fire-engine, and the trophied wall of Hampton Court Palace guard-room, on which mountain on wheels they put, eight years ago, a catafalque covered with an emblazoned table-cloth, and on that again the coffin, hat, and sword, of the great Duke of Wellington—a tinselled canopy covering all; then, harnessing a strong team of gin-spinners' horses, swaddled in sables and led by distillers' draymen disguised as undertakers, to this as-

tounding blunder, they dragged it through the streets of London: squads of policemen following behind with coils of rope to hoist its wheels up, should the funeral car happen to stick in the mire. Wretched abortion! I saw it the other day in a mean shed of the yard of Marlborough House, with nine country cousins staring in a bewildered manner at the carbines and kettle-drums, and at the hobby-horses, whose dusty black plumes are mouldering on their wooden heads.

But the strangest and the slowest state coaches these eyes ever beheld, were—not here, but in a stranger city, in a far-off country, more than a thousand miles away. I remember well the dark dull August afternoon, the impending thunderstorm, the hot atmosphere, the blighting chill in the shade, the wide stucco-façaded street, the mob of bearded men in pink caftans, striped drawers, and long boots, the policemen kicking, sticking, and thrusting this mob back, and then, issuing from the gates of the imperial stables, a long procession of state carriages, drawn each by six gigantic Pomeranian horses—the largest steeds I ever saw, and, as to their heels, sprung, every one of them. These carriages were, some, of the twelfth-cake waggon form; others, were like roomy Sedan chairs on wheels; all, were painted and carved, and gilded in the approved slow-coach fashion; but the sun happening to pierce through the clouds for a moment, I saw the near panels of the carriage next me glittering in a fantastic manner. Giving a policeman some money, and not being in beard or caftan, I was permitted to approach close to one of these sumptuous vehicles. I found each and every panel thickly encrusted with devices of bits of cut glass stuck in gilt setting. These were sham diamonds—O genius of barbaric pomp! and I laughed till I was obliged to bribe another policeman lest he should take me, by my merriment, to be a malcontent, and lay me by the heels. These were the state carriages of his Imperial Majesty Alexander Nicholaievitch, Tsar of all the Russias; and they were making a trial procession prior to being despatched per rail to Moscow the Holy, in time for the coronation solemnities. The majority of these sham diamond-ornamented slow coaches had been built in the time of the Tsarinas Anne and

Elizabeth, and one dated so far back as the time of the great Tsar Peter, who had caused it to be constructed for him in Vienna.

When I recal these quaint relics of a slow-coach age, I seem to stand in a Pantechnicon of remembrance, and not alone the bygone sheriffs' carriages, but a whole cavalcade of the slow coaches of the past, move sluggishly before me. Here comes the veritable coach-and-six—such a coach as is sculptured on the monument of the murdered Thynne in Westminster Abbey, such a coach as one of the six in which six squires of high degree set out to bail the Man of Ross when he lay under unjust accusation. Large contrivance of wood and leather, rumbling on broad-tired wheels, are thus drawn by long-tailed Flanders mares with hanging footmen and running footmen, and containing the lord-lieutenant of the county, my lady and her daughters, and the chaplain in the boot. Here comes the Cardinalitian slow coach, scarlet and gold, very gorgeous and fit equipage for a prince of the Church, but smelling of the rare singeing it underwent at the hands, or rather the torches, of the Mazzinians in 1849. Following it, comes the large sedan, gilt and embossed, carried by grinning lacqueys. Lady Bab shows her patched and painted face, and flirts her fan from the window, and anon the gilt and glazed sedan changes into the dingy and rickety affair still patronised by gouty valetudinarians at remote watering-places. Here, is the mule litter of the middle ages, with curtains blazoned with armorial devices—curtains very closely drawn; there may be a sick king or a languishing princess within. There, drags on slowly in its rear, the clumsy Turkish araba, drawn by white oxen with gilded yokes, and crimson tassels beneath their dewlaps. The araba has curtains, too, but they are not so closely drawn but that you may see the stout Turkish ladies within, their black eyes beaming over the yashmaks' barrier, their rosy-tipped fingers plucking flowers to pieces. They giggle and titter, and tease the hideous black servitors, who march, now sulky and now grinning, by the araba's side; they are on their way to the Valley of Sweet Waters to enjoy coffee, and sherbet, and sweetmeats, and the fragrance of narghilé-inhaled tobacco. Next do I catch a glimpse of a slow

coach that died in its Brobdignagian youth, an ephemeral monstrosity, the advertising van, frightening the second-floor windows from their propriety with amazing placards relating to eye-snuff, and oat-bruising, and medicated cream. All these fade into a watery mirage, and in my swimming sight is a pale vision of the old French inland hoy, the "coche" so called, which brought servants, and milliners, and apprentices, from the provinces to Paris during the old *regimé;* a dream of old diligences, and vetturini, and estafettes, and Eil-wagens; and of the corpulent, lazy, comfortable Flemish treykschuyt, full of beer and tobacco-smoke, and fat men, fat women, and fat children, and often of fat pork and mutton, that was wont to float in peaceful slow-coachdom on the waters of the Low Countries' shallow canals. And these, again, give way to the last slow coach of all, the HEARSE; but as I gaze upon it with gloomy forebodings, I see the undertaker's men who crowd its roof, swinging their legs airily, and joking among themselves. The nodding plumes give way before red noses, the palls and horsecloths are thrust inside, and the slow coach breaks into a fast trot.

ACCEPTED ADDRESSES.

Richard Cromwell, sometime (though for a very short and uneasy one) Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, was not, in my opinion, by any means the fool posterity has been so apt to take him for. I think him to have been exceedingly wise in his generation. Wise enough to know his own weakness —that he could as easily carry the gates of Gaza as the orb and sceptre; wise enough to find out, in time, that the part of Monarch did not suit him; and to quit the stage of power before the pit began to be sibilatingly cat-calling, uproarious, and the gallery to pelt him with oranges and penny pieces. He kept his head upon his shoulders, too; travelled on the continent; preserved a decent estate in England; and lived to a very great age. If the doing of four such things as these be not wisdom, I know not where wisdom dwells.

But the wisest, because the wittiest, thing I ever heard of the Lord Richard was this. When his friends (he *had* friends, though the son of the man Charles Stuart was at Whitehall) came to visit him at his house in the country, and when mirth and conviviality were carried even to the cracking of bottles, the drinking of healths, and the smoking of pipes of tobacco, Richard Cromwell—it is no shame to his memory to tell it—not unfrequently became somewhat elevated. He was wont, in these moments of hilarious excitement, to lead his guests to the topmost chamber of his house—to the very garret, in fact: then, from beneath a truckle-bed, he would pull an old, dilapidated, mangy, musty, ragged, calf-skin trunk; this he would then bestride, crying, "I sit upon the lives and fortunes of the good people of England." Whereupon, the guests, even if previously aware of the gist of Richard's jokes (and it is likely that not

only were they so, but that they had heard the witticism pretty nearly as many times as they had cracked bottles in Richard's house), these guests always affected ignorance of the quondam Protector's meaning, and gravely asked how the lives and fortunes of the English people could dwell in a calf-skin trunk. This was the signal for Richard gaily to open the trunk, and sportively to pelt his friends with flakes, showers, avalanches almost, of rolls of parchment and paper. These being unrolled, were found to contain ADDRESSES—elaborately engrossed, and many of them gorgeously illuminated—from nearly every corporation, university, and public body in the realm. Addresses of condolence to the Lord Richard on the death of his father, Oliver; of congratulation on his own accession; of immutable confidence, unswerving loyalty, imperishable devotion, uncompromising fidelity, enthusiastic willingness to lavish blood, treasures, time, words (though they said not the last), in the service of His Highness the Lord Protector. I think that his ex-Highness, although environed by his boon companions, in a garret, and bestriding a calf-skin coffer, and drunk, was both wise and witty when he railed, albeit for the hundredth time, at these lying Addresses; estimating at their proper value the parchment lives and fortunes of the "good people of England," as set forth in the big, empty, bladdery words (so soon after to be eaten with Restoration sauce) of the sapient corporations and public bodies. A real Democritus was Richard Cromwell; laughing to scorn the poor time-servers that were so eager to bespatter him with praise in his prosperity; that would, within three months, have gladly helped to gibbet and quarter him; that *did* leave him, for aught they knew, to starve.

Put down, if you please, as the thousand-and-second Humbug, the Humble and Dutiful Address of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the ancient Borough of Bosh. Bah! The world is full of make-believes. There are lies in epitaphs; there is deceit in a morning call; there is evanescence in a love letter. Yet, I have seen truth on tombstones; I have known friends who visited because they loved one another; and I do believe my Amelia's pink, scented, lace-bordered missive to have been sincere.

She has since married Mr. Snape, of the Civil Service. But, who ever believed in a Corporation Address, I should like to know? Do you, do I, do the addressers or the addresses? I can confidently answer in the negative. Nobody believes in it. Not the Committee who draw the Sham up. Nor the bewigged Recorder, who reads it aloud in a dreary coffee-mill-toned voice, as though he were expatiating on the "very bad case" of the royal or noble personage before him, as a prelude to a sentence of four years' penal servitude. Nor the Mayor, who stands by in robes that don't fit him, twiddling his cocked hat, and thinking how much better than the Recorder's would be *his* reading of the Address. Nor the Aldermen and Councillors, who yawn, and stand wearily on one leg in the background, devoutly wishing that refreshment time were come. Nor the Town-clerk, who is grumblingly expressing between his teeth his conviction that the Mayor, Recorder, and Committee are all humbugs; and that he, the Town-clerk, is the only proper person to draw up and read Addresses. Nor the Prince or Emperor, King or Kaiser, who receives the humble and dutiful Address, and returns the gracious (and equally reliable) Answer. Nor the courtiers, dollified in embroidery, who listen sneering. Nor the footmen, who grin behind the door; nor the people who stand outside, because there is a show; nor anybody, save, perhaps, the Father of Lies, who is blind to the faults of his children, and is as fond of a Corporation address as of that other parchment child of his—the Psychological conveyance, which desperate men are said to give him for gold. One might fancy the Master of Shams—the Mendax Maximus, on such occasions as these, squatting on an *épergne* in the banqueting-room, his legs curled under him, in an attitude of intense enjoyment; only regretting the too brief career of his offspring as the Lie is brought in state by the Prince, and the Mayor, the Corporation, and the Courtiers, to be made an end of in eating and drinking—to be buried in chicken and ham pie, and drowned in champagne.

Look at those good people at Dover the other day, who got up so early in the morning, shaved nervously (how many a corporate face was lacerated that morning in the pleasing tremor and excite-

ment of the great event!); squeezed themselves into uncomfortable clothes; walked so patiently in the fog; put themselves to immense expense; practised bowings, scrapings, reverences, walking backwards, and a variety of ceremonial movements fully as absurd as the Chinese *Ko-tou*, or Yankee procession before Fanny Ellsler (how heartily we can laugh at *those* ridiculous people, to be sure!); rubbed up their chains of office; wasted good ink and parchment; caught a live Recorder (who, you may be sure of it, had been practising elocution before a cheval glass for a week)—all for the extreme and inexpressible pleasure of standing for some seven minutes in the presence of Successful Power, of seeing him eat about half-a-crown's worth of a banquet that may have cost a hundred pounds (the Address was not half so real as the Bill of Fare), and of ultimately standing, bareheaded, and supremely felicitous, as Successful Power whisked off to town in a fast train. And the patriotic hotel-keeper, with his splendidly furnished apartments, and the interesting young ladies waiting on stair-landing to pop choice bouquets into the hands of the Great Man's fair spouse; and the guards of honour and militia bands in attendance; and the directors, and the worthy and indefatigable station-master. Look at the whole pageantry, mummery, and flummery of the business. But *this* is a genuine Address, you tell me; this means something. Alliance, reciprocity of friendship, consolidation of interests. This is a *bonâ fide* affair. Sir, begging your pardon, it isn't. *This* Address is of the shams and one. Successful Power is all very well. I shall be the last to speak against it (I only wish I had power and were successful); but I am constrained deliberately to express my opinion, with the deepest deference to the Mayor and Corporation of the ancient borough of Dover (I lived in Snargate Street myself once; had a little smoking pavilion far up in the grassy, chalky heights, and love the place), that this Address is no less a figment and a delusion than its predecessors. My dear Mr. Mayor and Corporation, it is not for the person to be addressed that you care for, but the Address itself. You like Committees of Management, snug little feeds preparatory to the grand banquet, cosy little rehearsals of the ceremonial; you like being

pestered by ladies for tickets in reserved seats; being privileged to go into places where other people can't go; being, for the nonce, arbiters of elegance, censors of arrangement, and critics of decorations. You like a holiday and a little fuss over it; and, ah me, you like (you do, indeed, Mr. Mayor and Co.) to see your names in full length, accompanied by a little judicious and elegant eulogy in the great London newspapers. Who is to blame you? You are not singular. Even the patriotic hotel-keeper likes to see *his* name popped into *The Times* by our "special reporter." The railway directors, on the other hand, would not, I am inclined to believe, file a criminal information against the proprietors of the leading journal if their names were inserted in connexion with the ceremonial, nor would the worthy and indefatigable station-master go sleepless to bed if he found that "our special" had happened to mention him in his report. I doubt, too, if Miss Kitty Merrychip, aged sixteen, would feel mortally offended if she found herself alluded to by name as the first of the interesting young ladies who presented the choice bouquets. *Vanitas vanitatum.* Are we not all alike? What a rage Snooks is in when in the list of the last division he finds his name spelt without the penultimate E! What wretched author, child of a garret and misery, and slave of a County Court bailiff as he may be, has not, at some period of his career, experienced exquisite delight at finding his name appended to a magazine article. And you, cynical Major Roster, half-pay of the Heavies—don't you look nervously at the *Court Newsman's* list to see if your name appears in its proper place among the presentations at the levee, and point it out when found to the fellows at your club? And you, Algernon St. Murkeydown, don't you feel a thrill of pleasure from your patent leather Alberts to the narrow strip of ribbon you call a cravat, when, glancing over the *compte rendu* of the Countess of Bassinet's dinner-party and ball, you find among the distinguished visitors "Lord Corneycut, Sir F. Bunnion, Mr. St. Murkeydown."

Far less do I blame the good people of Dover for inaugurating their Address with a "Feed"—nay, for finishing it up with one (hot, doubtless,) glass of punch in the Corporation silver punch-

bowl—healths—a few quarrels—identity of hats mistaken—separation late. *Vanita vanitatum!* Are we not all alike? I knew a respectable man who liked being summoned as a juryman on coroners' inquests. He relished his pipe so, afterwards, he said. To many a barrister the best part of the Circuit is the bar mess. Who wouldn't give a bride away for the breakfast afterwards? Who (the sorrow struck excepted) shirks his wine at a funeral? We lie in wait for opportunities to enjoy extra eating and drinking. A man goes away, and we give him a dinner. He comes back, and we give him another dinner. We dine for charity, for ostentation, many times with no better excuse than that "we might as well have a bit of dinner together." Ships are launched to the popping of champagne corks and the consumption of lobster salad; first stones of churches cannot be laid without a neat breakfast afterwards. Life Assurance Companies are inaugurated by spreads. *Semper manducamus.* We are always eating supererogatively, and yet take our regular meals besides, and would cry out if we were deprived of them.

And yet the address is a sham, for all this parleying. Good people, you fancy that you believe in it, but you don't indeed. As, in five cases out of ten, a man persuades himself he is in love with a fair woman, when simply he is all the while in love with himself, so do you persuade yourself that you esteem, venerate the person you address, when it is simply the document itself, and its concomitants, that you have any esteem or veneration for. What a rage you would have been in, if Successful Power had landed at Folkestone instead of Dover! There seems to be some hidden spring in the municipal mind, continually welling forth addresses. They are always there, and Fate rains down a fair supply of great personages to be addressed. Now, it is some Turkish or Egyptian dignitary in baggy trousers and a fez cap, who, while he is being talked at, seems gloomily to be wishing that he could deliver the Mayor and Corporation to the bastinado or the bowiting at once. Now, it is an unhappy yellow-faced Indian Prince, shivering in his muslins, and longing for his hookah, while the dreary talker goes on. Now, it is a stray Governor-General or Military Commander returning from a campaign; now, a

South American President; now (when business is very flat), an Anti-Manooth Nobleman or a Protectionist Baronet, or *vice versâ*, as the case may be. Sometimes there is an utter dearth and total failure of the crop of notable people to be addressed. Despair reigns in all corporate towns; but relief is soon at hand. Royalty takes pity upon the Municipal destitution, and makes a railroad progress through the land. All is hilarity again. Chains furbished up; robes donned; feasts ordered of the cook and confectioner; addresses drawn up; and the Mayor and Corporation go scampering about railway stations, shoving gilt pokers into Her Majesty's carriages; rattling bunches of rusty keys upon plates ("property" keys oponing no locks of any gates) in token of allegiance and submission, and thrusting their unmeaning parchment "lives and fortunes" in at the coach windows, as the poor ragged boys and girls, that run after opera and playgoing cabs, thrust in books of the opera and bills of the play.

Fully satisfied in my own mind of the utter rottenness, hollowness, shallowness, mendacity, and ephemeral nature of the thing called an address—own brother as it is to that other pretence, a Testimonial (Sir, I have signed addresses, and subscribed to the doctor who took the very coat off my stomach's back; the schoolmaster who cheated, starved, and beat me; and the steam-boat captain, who, for anything I cared about him, might have been swallowed up then and there by Leviathian, or the Kraken, or the ravenous salt sea shark)—fully satisfied that the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of all the boroughs about to present addresses to a certain great man, were all humbugs; fully satisfied of these things, I became, thereupon, not unnaturally dissatisfied, and viewed with great grumbling and discontent the mighty preparations for the reception of that great man some few weeks agone. He was to go from one end of Babylon in a golden coach. The Ædiles were to present him with an address, and feast him out of vessels of gold and vessels of silver; the trumpets were to bray, and the guardsmen were to prance, and the people were to shout at him—the inconstant, loud-lunged people, who have as hearty a shout for Tom Thumb as for Kossuth; for a dwarf in a van, to be seen for a penny, as for Goliah of Gath; for an Acrobat as for

an Emperor; for Jack the Giant Killer as for Jack in the Green.

I grumbled rarely. Corporations were getting up addresses all over the country. Committees were sitting day and night to arrange the order of the illustrious visitor's reception. There were to be flags, purple velvet hangings embroidered with golden bees, chairs of state, raised daïs, stands of flowers, exotic plants, tents, reserved seats for the Corps Diplomatique, clear turtle soups, *galantines à la gelée*, ortolons, ptarmigans, sillery, champagne, and sherry one hundred and nine years old, costing six hundred pounds per butt. Oh! vanity of human life and human addresses! The six hundred pounds sherry was first supplied years ago to the great man's uncle. "Death to the Saxon," "Confusion to the Insuline," "Strangulation to the Leopard," toasts like these have been drunk in that ancient high-priced wine. The times are altered; off with the old love, and on with the new. At the Pompes Funèbres in Paris, friend, they have different sets of palls, hangings, biers, baldaquins embroidered with different initials and escutcheons, all ready provided and laid by for wealthy "parties." The undertaker's men rush to PAUL'S front door, directly that estimable member of society is safe under ground, pull down the fine black velvet draperies with the P's in silver embroidered on them, and scamper away to suspend them before the portal of PETER, that virtuous husband and father who is only just dead. P. goes for both. The same hangings, torches, initials, escutcheons, serve John the beloved to-day, as shall serve Judas Iscariot to-morrow.

Grumblingly I wandered up and down Babylon—even from Pall Mall to King Street, Cheapside, four hours before the pageant was to pass; I looked into the shop fronts denuded of goods and now filled with fair ladies. I scanned them cynically, and with a gloomy satisfaction noticed that the ladies were not at all fair, but that some, though sitting in silk attire, though flounced, furbelowed, ribboned, and ringleted ("dressed up to the nines" is, I am informed, the East-End term for this advanced stage of costume), were undeniably hideous—in plain language, "guys." But in the great drapery establishments, in Ludgate Hill and

Cheapside, for instance, the ladies were *very* fair, and the stock in trade in the window was not so much removed as transplanted; for the moire antiques, the soies glacés, the rich Genoa velvets, the Cashmere shawls, and braided mantles, cut skilfully, displayed by the practised hands of "our young men," now shone in redoubled splendour upon sylph-like forms, or upon the more developed physiques of blooming matrons; they needed there no ticket writer's announcement in Cobalt blue and gold, with flourishes of "gorgeous pattern," "very chaste," "fresh from Paris," "Real India," or "as worn at the Tuilleries." The wearers were living, smiling, blushing, desperately charming commentaries upon the first-rate quality of Messrs. Padduvoy and Son's, or Messrs. Nobbykritte and Co.'s goods. I declare that the good looks, the arch bonnets, the dainty parasols, the tiny-gloved hands of the houris I saw in the shop windows, very nearly put my cynicism to flight. But I had remembered, with renewed firm complacency, that these houris would want lunch, and must be fed; that it was not improbable that the "guys" would quarrel with them, and say sharp words to them, in the weary interval of waiting for the procession. I remembered that traffic was suspended, and that the shop-keeper would lose his day's sale; that flags, banners, and pendants cost money; that the day was the hottest and sultriest (with a nipping east wind round the corner, though lurking in ambush, like a discontented spectator hissing the mummery from a side-box); that pale ale and bottled stout were dear at per doz.; that it might rain; that some windows were sure to be broken; some rude boys sure to stand in peoples' light; that the procession might go designedly over Vauxhall Bridge, and there be no show in Fleet Street; that there might be mobs and rioting in the back streets; that to use figurative language, somebody might turn off the lights and let the bear loose—in other words, that the whole thing might be a failure. Yes, I thought, uncharitably, yet with an uneasy pleasure to myself, there is a balm for the bilious in Gresham Street as well as Gilead. Messrs. Edington's tent may not prove waterproof, and it may rain, and the rain come through; the six hundred pounds sherry may turn out to be villanous cape, not worth drinking; the Recorder may

mislay his spectacles, and be unable to read the address; at the eleventh hour, the last minute, the great man may be convinced of the preposterous folly and humbug of the whole affair, and refuse to sanction the sham with his presence. It is mighty easy to be invited out to dinner to "meet Johnson and Burke," but how often you go and dine, and Johnson and Burke don't come.

J. and B., represented by the great man, *did* come this time, however. I saw it all. Gingerbread carriages (one impassible face looking out of one of them), foreigner and distinguished suite in embroidery and spectacles (why are attendants upon royalty so distressingly and frequently short-sighted?); ladies of honour, life guards, and superintendents of police on horseback, trying to look military, and making failures in the attempt, half melancholy, half ludicrous. And when it had all gone by—when I had seen all the paraphernalia of Royalty and Imperialism mingled—footmen, outriders, trumpeters, wigs, gold lace, swords, plumes, and cocked hats—when I had had my toes trodden upon by the hind legs of the carabineers' horses—when policeman A had been rude to me, and I had been sarcastic upon policeman B—and when policeman C, avenging both his comrades, had uplifted the staff of the law and Sir Richard Mayne against me, and therewith nearly accomplished the demolition of my hat—when the crowd had broken up (grumbling desperately, I rejoiced to hear, because the great man's carriage was closed, and there were not more soldiers and gay dresses), I turned down a bye street, devoting all Addresses and Address Banquets to the great limbo of humbugs.

Yes, I said bitterly, are they not at all the same—"Allied Sovereigns," Commemorations, Opening Exchanges, Exhibitions, and Markets; Laying First Stones, Ship-launches, Reviews, Birthdays, and Anniversaries? A pack of people put on their finest clothes, make speeches to one another, of which they don't believe one single word, and then fall to eating and drinking things most unwholesome for them. And while these people are pursuing their reprehensible devices, I, John Taxpayer, am obliged to work for my living, or, if I *do* make half-holidays, and go and see the show, Private Higgs of the Carabineers smashes my corn with the hinder hoofs of his horse, and policeman C destroys my

hat with his truncheon. Yes, I dare say you will illuminate to-night—I dare say you will tell me this is a day of public rejoicing. Do you remember a certain day in November, 'fifty-two, Sir—when a great scarlet and black show went through Babylon from Hyde Park Corner to St. Paul's? There was as great a show of fair ladies in shop fronts on that occasion; there was sherry; there were sandwiches, ale, and stout at per dozen; champagne, and chicken and ham pies. A friend of mine, a cynic, even more bitter than I am, tells me that, with the exception of the coronation day, he never knew London so *drunk* as it was during the period of the scarlet and black show. And was that a day of rejoicing? I am not going to move for the abolition of shows; let me have *panem et circenses* by all means: but let shows—State or otherwise—be considered and recognised in future merely in the light of masques, burlesque spectacles, brilliant mummeries, specially designed to amuse, but having no pretence to take anybody in. And if Addresses be accepted, let their acceptation be of the same nature as what we accord to the Addresses of Messrs. Merriman and Hatterfelto; to "Hot Codlings," as given by Tom Matthews, and "Tippetiwichet," as delivered by Mr. Richard Flexmore.

I dare say I am a grumbler, and the Mayors and Corporations know much more about Address matters than I do. Perhaps I am jealous that the municipal authorities at Dover did not telegraph down for me, or that the Guildhall Committee did not send me a ticket for the reserved seats. But I have said my say, and mean what I have said. There is tinsel in other places besides the stage; but in an Address there is a special, indigenous hollowness and mendacity that no other sham on earth possesses.

PETTICOAT LANE.

A MAN might live and die, and exhaust his span of life in London, without hearing of—to say nothing of seeing—a tithe of the extraordinary streets and the more extraordinary phases of social existence that are daily and hourly offered to our view in this Metropolis of England and the world. He might strut and fret his hour on the stage, and break his heart in growing rich or poor; he might call himself a "man upon town," and boast that he was "born within the sound of Bow Bells," and had been "sworn at Highgate;" he might imagine himself a thorough-bred Cockney and graduated adept in every mystery of "Life in London;" he might fall, at last, into "the portions of weeds and outworn faces;" his name might become a noise, and his place know him no more; and still nine-tenths of the mighty arcana of metropolitan topography would be to him a sealed book—a cipher of which he had not the key—a Shibboleth he could not understand—a masonic degree into which he had not been initiated.

And at this present time of writing, we are forming associations, and sending out expeditions to complete our antiquarian researches and excavations in the dead capital of a dead empire. Lords and lawyers, doctors and *dilettanti*, help to swell the list of directors of, and subscribers to, a company, whose object it is to further and achieve what Layard has so ably begun. We are insatiably curious about Babylon and Nineveh, and the King of the Assyrians. Sennacharib, in all his glories, must be unfolded before us. We must know every feather and every muscle of the winged bulls and human-faced lions. We can look two thousand miles—five thousand years back; but we cannot look at home, and at what goes on at home, in the very moment of

time we move and live and write in. We contemptuously ignore the fact, that we have a Nineveh at the end of our noses—a Babylon in Bermondsey or Bethnal-Green—a palace of Sennacharib in Shoreditch—that a Sardinapalus may be found in Stepney, and cuneiform inscriptions in the New Cut. Like Mr. Jellyby, our eyes are fixed with such strained earnestness upon Borrisboola Gha, that we cannot spare a glance for the marvellous sights and people over the way, round the corner, at the end of the next street, in our own houses, even.

It is the intention of your servant, the present writer (himself a town traveller and citizen of the world of some small experience), to place before you the result of some travels he has lately undertaken in the more recondite districts of this enormous world-city of London—the "great wen," as the Member for Oldham called it. Your Excellency may object that some of the scenes your servant may undertake to depict are low—that he may take you into places and among people not qualified to come between the wind and your Excellency's nobility. I, your servant, will respectfully submit that a Duch picture of still life (even though that still life be cabbages and onions and broken pots) is oftentimes more valuable than a smirking Lawrence or a ringleted Chalon; that Shakspeare once remarked that there were "Sermons in Stones;" that it is somewhere written that there have been great services rendered ere now *ex manibus parvulorum*,—at the hands of the smallest, the weakest, the most despised; that, in a word, Patience and Consciousness can extract from the meanest, the lowest, the most repulsive of subjects, that greatest of all morals—the truth. And, lest these brick and mortar moralities should be deemed, at best, but hard and austere fare—Spartan black broth, as it were—the Amphytrions of the Banquet have herewith added as *entremets* some more *piquant* "plates," the production of a noted *Chef*, one Harwell, whose efforts may act as relishes to the graver *pièces de résistance*, as olives to the heavy port wine.

Petticoat Lane on a Sunday Morning! Were you ever there, fair or gentle reader? If you be fair, I will lay heavy odds that you never were. Fair or gentle, and granting, even, that you

have heard of such a place, 'tis ten to one that your imagination will not lead you to form a more vivid idea of the place than as what most London streets and lanes are like, on Sunday morning—dull, quiet, the shops closed, the inhabitants dressed in their Sunday best, the little children smooth and rosy-cheeked from recent washing, and the pleasant bells ringing cheerfully out in the distance for church or chapel. Such, for instance, is the Sunday aspect of Brompton, or of Chelsea, when it may please your Excellency to ride; but only avail yourselves of the locomotive faculties of a Brompton or Chelsea omnibus; let that omnibus land you in Bishopsgate Street, or, better still, at Aldgate Pump, and a few minutes' walk will take you into the very heart of a district teaming with life and bustle and commercial activity: where the sounds of the church-going bells are fairly drowned by the shrieks of buyers and sellers: where Mammon has set up his booth full in the face of Sunday morning: and where "Pulpit, drum ecclesiastic," might be beaten with a fist or with a stick, with a poker or with a feather, for any effect it would produce upon the busy frequenters of Petticoat Lane.

Touching the geography of this interesting locality—its exact latitude and longitude, it would require the joint exertions of Strabo, Mercator, and Baron Humboldt to define and explain it thoroughly. Suffice it to say, that it is within a stone's throw of Houndsditch and the Clothes Exchange; through which, indeed, it may be entered by a tortuous thoroughfare, known as Harrow Lane; that it is hard by the Minories, close to Duke's Place, nor far from the Rosemary Lane and Rag Fair, and that it has an outlet or *vomitorium* in Whitechapel High Street. In a word, Petticoat Lane is one of the main ducts or arteries of Hebrew London; and Sunday being, as all men know, the morrow of Hebrew Sabbath, or "Shobbhouse," the "peculiar people" make up for their compulsory idleness on Saturday by an extra keenness in chaffering and bartering, buying and selling, on the morning of *our* sabbath.

It is just eleven o'clock as we enter this Israelitish Vanity Fair by Harrow Lane. We have been tolerably hustled and jos-

tled, pushed and *scrouged*, in the adjoining Clothes Exchange. Our favourite corns have been trod upon, and our tenderest feelings of *amour propre* outraged in that vast emporium of cast-off habiliments, by eager merchants, who have besought us frantically to buy waiscoats large enough for Daniel Lambert or Mr. Hales the Drury Lane giant, or, on the other hand, essayed to force us into paletots which would have been tight fits for General Tom Thumb. But all the hustling, jostling, pushing, and scrouging we have before undergone cannot in the slightest degree compare with what we experience from the crowd in the "Lane:"—the rushing, roaring, riving, panting, kicking, striving, perspiring crowd! I want words to describe its intensity of heat, noise, and number. Southey's "Waters," which came down with such a terrific noise at "Ladore;" a thronged meeting of railway shareholders, discontented with the announcement of a deferred dividend of two-halfpenny per cent.:—an amalgamated conception of all these might perhaps give you some faint notion of the excitement of the Petticotians: the crowded "Lane" itself is perfectly *sui generis;* nought but itself could be its parallel.

There are portly Jew females with huge flat fruit-baskets full of coats and waistcoats; bushy whiskered men, bartering a pair of stays for a wide-awake hat; sturdy costermongers buying babies' caps; slender girls, staggering under the weight of peacoats and fustian jackets; young Hebrew dandies, with chin tips and massive rings and watch chains, with an odd pair of trousers or so carried neatly under the arm, as the Fiend in the "Devil's Walk" does his tail—"as a gentleman carries his cain." There are boys with hats perched on the top of their caps and bonnets above their hats; here are old clothes in baskets and old clothes in bags; and in barrows, in boxes, in bundles, bales almost. Not that the traffic is confined to left-off garments solely. On the contrary: the old clothes commerce belongs legitimately to the Clothes Exchange; there are its head quarters and its chief *locus standi;* what portion of clothes dealing comes into Petticoat Lane is merely the overflowing of the crowded mart, the gleaning from the fecund harvest field of coat and trousers,

fully ripened! In the "Lane," we also meet with peripatetic merchants selling boots and shoes, gaberdines, hats, stays, petticoats, walking sticks, stockings, combs, musical instruments, toys, and cutlery. Here are costermongers' barrows, filled, some with choice assortment of apples, oranges, and nuts; some with rustiest and most dilapidated keys, bolts, bars, locks, and door handles; some with gridirons, fryingpans, saucepans, and similar articles of culinary hardware. Here are barrows full of prints and books, ay! books and prints, your Excellency; and eager groups press round them, turning over "Milton's Paradise Lost," bargaining for a highly coloured lithograph of "Her Blessed Majesty on Horseback"—or offering a "tanner" for Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Barrows, too, are there, presenting a display of vividly variegated mixed pickles in bottles—declared by their venders to be the greatest wonder of the world! "The greatest wonder of the world! The Great Exhibition Pickle! a shilling bottle for threepence!" Here are hot pie men and cold pie men, venders of figs, "sweetstuff," pigs' feet, ham sandwiches, ginger beer, and lemonade: all lauding their several ware with stentorian lungs—some pushing their barrows, some dragging them, some stationary, some circulating in the crowd with their baskets of merchandise poised on the tops of their heads, and, marvellous to state, keeping their equilibrium at that giddy elevation; but all roaring, bargaining, and pushing, and doing, to judge by their activity, a prodigious amount of business.

As we progress up the "Lane," we remark that all the shops on either side are wide open. No Sunday closing *here*. In most instances the windows of the shops have been knocked out, and the whole stock in trade is exposed to the inspection and manipulation of the passer by. The grocer and the baker sport glass windows, but in the vast majority of shops the *bare faced* rule holds good.

I may observe that in many of these shops the pickle interest comes out very strong. Mixed pickles, and walnut pickles, pickled gerkins, onions, and notably pickled cabbage, in bottles, cups, and saucers, and shallow basins, are laid out in tempting variety of colour and flavour. There is likewise an anomalous

preparation of preserved vegetable, which, from its appearance, I have yet some hesitation in pronouncing to be pickled pumpkin, or pickled melon, or pickled vegetable marrow, and which I have not yet had the courage to taste. Additional interest is imparted to the pickle question by the startling announcement, "Great News! Great News! Good Malt Vinegar twopence a quart!" pasted on a door-post. What matters it, if after this, if Turkey fall or Nicholas be devoured by one of his own Cossacks? Good malt vinegar is to be plentiful and cheap, and pickles are safe! The Jews are great pickle eaters; and it is very curious that this taste and their known *penchant* for smoking tobacco, appear to have operated in a great measure among them as specifics against the frightful scourge of Cholera, from which the Jews have been hitherto almost totally exempt. It would be a curious archæological question, to trace the origin of the Hebrew appetite for pickles. Lime juice, as is well known, is an excellent preservative against cutaneous diseases, and it may be that the early prevalence of leprosy among the Jews, and their sufferings from that ghastly disease, have made the use of pickles traditional among them. Be it as it may, the stock of pickles, and pickle consumers, are very considerable. The goods themselves appear to be manufactured in a very impromptu and unsophisticated manner—a souse of vinegar over a panful of vegetables, being generally considered sufficient for all pickling purposes; reminding me, by the way, of an adventure which once happened to an acquaintance of mine while travelling in the Island of Ireland. Happening to partake of cold beef at a small hostelry, and meekly aking for a pickled onion, he was met with the ready response, "In a minit, yer honour, in a minit: sure its *boilin the inion we are!*"

Petticoat Lane can also boast of sundry pastry-cooks' shops, where a choice collection of confectionery, in which the oleaginous decidedly preponderates over the saccharine, tempts the passing customer. The Hebrew palate is essentially *friande:* it delights in oil and things oily; and in the viands provided for its refection, in Petticoat Lane, it can fill itself with oil. Not only are there shops for the sale of greasy pancakes, greasy puffs,

and greasy tarts; but, in adjacent *boutiques*, are stores of fish fried in oil—greasy flounders, of a bright golden colour—some heaped on plates, some simmering in huge cauldrons of oil. Flasks or jars of oil pursue the wayfarer at every step; every second man is oily; and what with the greasy shops, and greasy food, and greasier coats and beards, the philosopher ceases at last to wonder that the Jews should abhor fat pork. They have enough unctuosity here, the rogues, to lubricate all Jewry to all posterity.

Be it remembered, moreover, among the notabilities of Petticoat Lane, that there are shops for the sale of pickled fish, and especially of squat hunks of salt ling, looking about as hard and inviting as pieces of curd soap; also numerous warehouses for the vending of jewellery, mostly of the cheap and flashy cast—diamond rings being quoted sometimes as low as eighteen pence, and massive pearl necklaces disposed of at "alarming sacrifices" of one and nine-pence. The shops—pickle, pastry-cook's, fried-fish and all—the baker's (who has a store of Passover cakes)—the grocer's (he sells plenty of dates and almonds, both much admired by the "people")—are kept by Jews and Jewesses. There are fat male Israelites and fat female ditto; there are slim young Jew boys and slim young Jewesses:—ye Gods! such Jewesses, such houris, such followers of Israel, such lilies of Judah, with such ruby lips, such gazelle-like eyes, such pearly teeth, such witching smiles, that I am tempted for at least two minutes to let my beard grow, wear a gaberdine, be called Rabbi Ben Smith, and be a scribe among the "peoplesh"—till one of the young Jewesses importunes me with a bracelet, and another threatens me with fried fish, and a third assaults me with a double-breasted waistcoat; and I become once more a peripatetic philosopher.

Yet more sights are there for the curious in the Lane of Petticoats. Here is a shop, open windowed, like its fellows, in which sits before a bench two lusty Hebrews, hammering away for dear life, at a pot and a kettle. All sorts of ironmongery and culinary utensils lie scattered about. These Hebrew tinkers—I beg pardon, tinmen—make and mend all kinds of articles of hardware, from

a flat iron to a fender, for the inhabitants of the Lane. At the door stands a Hebrew lady, voluble and vociferous, brandishing a dilapidated kettle. Either the tinmen have mended her kettle badly, or else they have refused to mend it at a given price, or something is wrong with the kettle or the tinman or the lady. The latter is intensely vituperative and noisy; so are the hammers. Sometimes the one gets the upper hand,—sometimes the other; but the noise never ceases. A considerable crowd gather round the disputants; and the general Hebrew opinion is that "Mishiss Lazarush ish very 'frume' this morning."

As I step aside for a moment, and contemplate this curious scene and people, my mind reverts to Tubal Cain, to Alexander the Coppersmith, to Jerusalem of old. And anon, I begin to think of that marvellous Jewish unity, so fixed, so immutable; of the language and the people; the customs, the dresses, almost unchanged for thrice five hundred years. This Petticoat Lane might be the Ghetto at Rome, the Indeustrasse at Frankfort, the quarter of the "Yaondi" in Stamboul: it might be a street in Jerusalem, for the types, the strange gestures, the eager language, the keen bargaining, are common to Jewry (and to Jewry alone) all over the world. Here are the buyers and sellers, the tables of the money changers, the sellers of doves and pigeons and sparrows—here is the Hebrew tongue, and here the Hebrew visage, gesture, life—to be a sign and a wonder, a warning and an evidence to us till the day when sages shall fret no more over unsolved problems, and babes and sucklings shall be as wise as Plato.

The stationary population of Petticoat Lane is almost entirely Jewish; but every Sunday morning brings a large floating emigration of Christians. The market is, indeed, mostly kept *by* the Jews *for* the Gentiles. Hither come Christian costermongers, labourers, small mechanics, small tradesmen even, to purchase articles of wearing apparel, or for miscellaneous purposes. They toil so hard during the week, and many of them receive their earnings so late on Saturday night, that Sunday morning is positively the only time they can afford for marketting.

In conclusion, I may state that this brief account of Petticoat Lane would be imperfect were I to omit to mention that the *spirituous*, if not *spiritual*, wants of the inhabitants are provided for in the shape of several public-houses; one of which, the "Gun and Star," is kept by the erst famous Aby Belasco, once a hero of the "P. R."

THE PRECINCT.

EVERY one has his separate, and generally his secret, ideal of perfect felicity. Baucis and Philemon had theirs. The sailor wanted "all the baccy in the world," and then "more baccy," to make him completely happy. M. Gavarni, the admirable débardeur-draughtsman, sighs after the discovery of aërial navigation. The captain in a marching regiment, with nothing but his pay to live on, beholds the acme of contentment in a staff appointment. The usher dreams of a seventh heaven of independent schoolmastership. To the fine lady, happiness must mean a dress or a bonnet which her inferiors will not copy, and consequently vulgarize as a fashion. To the minister, happiness must be parliament without her Majesty's opposition. There is something that will make a young ballet-girl much more joyous than will the possession of diamonds, or a Brougham, or a Blenheim spaniel; and that is to be allowed to speak some "lines," however few in number. The happiest man in the world, according to the Eastern apologue, was he who had no shirt. Charles Lamb said that were he not a gentleman he should dearly like to be a beggar; and I once heard of a young rustic—one of those ploughboy philosophers so happily delineated by Mr. Hunt—who, being asked *his* notion of supreme happiness, made answer that it was to "zit on a ztile and eat pancake edges!" There is much wealth of covetous imagination in eating only the crisp "edges" of the Shrove Tuesday delicacies and throwing the flabby centres away. Under the influence of metempsychosis this Alnaschar in a smock frock, might have been a Cleopatra, and quaffed a solution of pearls in toilet-vinegar.

"I've often wished that I had clear"—any one can quote the rest: the five hundred pounds a year, the river at the gar-

den's end, the handsome accommodation for a friend, the friend himself and the bottle to give him—the ripe old port with the green seal, laid down, Consule Manlio, when Sir Claudius Hunter was Lord Mayor. I have had many ideals of happiness; have constructed on cobweb foundations many Spanish castles with "Here the Lares delight to dwell" sculptured over the barbicans thereof. To wear a tail-coat, to see one's name in print, to hear a famous orator, author, artist speak, to eat an ice in St. Mark's Place, Venice, to possess a library, a picture by Ostade, to see Taglioni dance—I, you, and thousands have longed for these things, and, being gratified in Time's good time, have begun straightway to long for something else. I have a fanciful ambition, now. I should like exceedingly to have a moderate independence, to have nothing to do, to be perfectly unknown to the publishers of books, the printers of newspapers, and those that carry proof sheets to and fro, and to live in the PRECINCT.

It is the most retired spot, this Precinct, in London. More retired than Austin Friars, than America Square, than Great St. Helen's, than St. Alban's Place, than Whitehall Yard, than the Albany, than Eel-Pie Island, than Fig Tree Court, than Paul's Chain, than Drapers' Hall Gardens, than Exeter 'Change, than the Magazine in Hyde Park, than Bell Square, Finsbury, or than Well Walk, Hampstead, on a winter Sunday. It is completely out of the world, although on the skirt and verge and hem of the roaring world of London. It is at least a century and a half behind the time, notwithstanding the modern "improvements" that have encroached on its antiquity, and the modern trades and avocations that are carried on within its boundaries. It has its own laws, its own population, its own amusements. It might be five thousand miles away from London. It might be Juan Fernandez, or Norfolk Island, or Key West, or the Isola Bella, and it is but five minutes' walk from Temple Bar, to the east, and eight from Charing Cross, to the west. And its name is—the Precinct. Concerning its characteristics I may be explicit, with regard to its exact locality I must be cautious. All men are not, at once, to be made free of the Precinct. It has its mysteries, its pass-words, and its counter-

signs. You would not believe me were I to tell you that it is a province in the kingdom of Cockaigne and the realms of Prester John; that there are giants in the Precinct; that the pigs run about, their backs embrowned into crackling, knives and forks stuck in them, and crying "Come, eat us!" and that when the sky falls—a feat it accomplishes sometimes, tumbling straight on the heads of the Precinctians—larks ready-roasted, are to be had for the picking up. Such statements you would deride as fabulous; but I may claim more credence when I whisper that the Precinct is extra-parochial and is royal property, that it has its own famous and ancient little church, that it is bounded on the south by one of the noblest rivers and certainly the dirtiest river in the world, and on the north by a mile-long thoroughfare, once dignified as the site of the palaces of a Duke of Buckingham, and some earls of Essex, Durham, Salisbury, and Arundel, to say nothing of the Lords of Burleigh over the way, or the still-existent, lion-capped mansion of the Percys; once enlivened by the presence of a maypole and an exchange, once a mere bridle road from the city of London to the village of Charing; now one of the chief arteries, most busy and most thronged, of the teeming city. In this latitude lies the Precinct, and not one man in five hundred who jostle along the noisy Strand ever dreams of its existence.

The Precinct has a history, curious, antique, and picturesque; but to dwell on its records in detail would not only weary, but necessitate the mention of sundry well-known names and events that would at once entirely lay bare that which, with all my confidences, I wish to preserve a semi-secret. It is enough to hint that a king of France was once entertained, most hospitably for a prisoner of war, in the Precinct; that here were an ecclesiastical hospital and an almshouse for aged men; that here were once a military prison and a manufactory of alum; and that here the immediate successors of Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde set up their printing-presses. The little old church, much modernised by the munificence of Georgius Ultimus, King, Defender of the Faith, but in patches of its exterior walls a fabric of the densest antiquity, I will call St. Mary-le-Chou.

About fifty yards to the north-east, a precipitous break-neck staircase of worn stone, called Cabbage Steps, leads into the Strand above; for the Precinct is built on an inclined plane, which renders necessary the application of the skid to the few wheels that graze its paving-stones. North-west, the Precinct is entered by a sly little street, running swiftly down hill, and which I will name Greenstuff Street. And if you want to get into the Precinct any other way you must either tumble into it from a balloon, or have a swim for it from the Surrey side.

It has been matter of much cogitation to me to call to mind in what manner I first become aware of the Precinct. I had certainly been broken into the ways of the Strand for years, and had resided in chambers or lodging-houses in nearly every street on the south side, from Northumberland to Norfolk Street, ere I became acquainted with this royal property. I used to think the short cut from Scotland Yard to Hungerford Market quaint and curious. I used to take pleasure in that beautiful water-gate at the end of Buckingham Street (by the house in whose first-floor our ETTY lived and painted for years). I was one of a select few, I vainly plumed myself, who had explored the dark arches of the Adelphi at three in the morning, who knew that Salisbury Street was not a cul-de-sac guarded by a railing, but that a staircase—a staircase, oh ye fugitives!—led down to the foreshore of the Thames; one of a few who had walked on the Adelphi Terrace, and had noted that odd, embossed house at the corner of Adam and John Streets. I flattered myself that few of my standing had imbibed porter among the jovial coal-heavers at that mysterious hostelry called the "Fox under the Hill," or had shared with very early risers, and the ladies and gentlemen in the habit of frequenting the old stage door of the Strand Theatre, the knowledge that in Strand Lane are the old Roman baths, subsequently patronized by Her Majesty Queen Anne, and from which, the legends tell, a duct runs to the deep well of the "Old Dog," in Holywell Street. So men live for years, and fancy they are aware of the things around them, and of the strangest know nothing at all. Wellington, despite an apocryphal anecdote and a dubious engraving, never met Nelson;

Mr. Howe dined for years in the house opposite to the residence of the wife he had so unaccountably deserted; and at least one eminent tragedian is profoundly ignorant of the very existence of his rival. How first I came to know the Precinct I can scarcely tell, and matters but little. It may have been on a mooning expedition, some solitary Sunday afternoon in the old time, when I had, properly, nothing to do, and, improperly, nowhere to go, and when it was my custom to wander up and down, and be thankful for what new localities turned up. It may have been, and I incline rather to this last theory, on some hot July afternoon, when meeting my friend, Tom Shrooder, and proposing to him cool refreshments, with straws, and ice, and lemon-peel galore, at the Divan, he laughed at the idea of such expensive luxuries to scorn, and quoth:

"In such a thermometrical state, no honest man drinks anything but shandy-gaff. And save at the Grinning Ape, at Walton-on-the-Naze, there is no drinkable shandy-gaff in England equal to Mrs. Turniptop's, at the Precinct Palace."

Now, Tom Shrooder knows the world as Bride Lane knows its betting-book, and a bill-discounter his Boyle's Court Guide and Army List. I had but to acquiesce in Shrooder's suggestion (he was hopelessly briefless here, went out to New Atlantis Island, under favour of my Lord Baconrind, and is now Chief Justice of the colony), but I could not help asking, humbly, where the Precinct was?

"Not know the Precinct!" cried Thomas, with a long whistle and a longer stare. "What an innocent, what a child of nature, what an unsophisticated griff you must be! The Precinct is the shadiest haunt in London. Shaded from the sun by architecture; shaded from the sheriff by happy obscurity; and, now that they have unsanctuaryised Whitefriars and the Mint, it is one of the few places in London where a man, so long as he hold his tongue, can hide his head. Presto! Come to the Precinct." And, somehow or other, Tom Shrooder spirited me away from a Hansom cab accident, from an omnibus, even from a van—with a brass band in it—proceeding to Highbury Barn; from a fire-engine, from all the turmoil and jangling of the Strand; and

three minutes afterwards we were seated at the open window of the Precinct Palace's first-floor, sipping our shandy-gaff, and gazing at the chequered light and shade in the green old churchyard. Yes, I think that must have been my earliest introduction to the pleasant place.

I am almost ashamed to admit, now—when, after much hesitation and many misgivings as to being blackballed, I have had my name put up at the Podasokus Club—that the Precinct Palace is neither more nor less than a public-house. It is a highly respectable tavern, but it cannot be denied that the landlord is a licensed victualler and wears an apron, and that the place itself is a "public." But it was so long long ago that I visited it, I plead; and the Podasokus wasn't built then; and respectable people used to drop in sometimes at taverns, they used indeed. I am writing of a region far behind the time; and ere these lines are printed a law may be passed creating cabarets and wine-shops that may one day supersede taverns in toto, and leave the Precinct farther behind than ever. Be it as it may, it is impossible to know anything of the Precinct without frequenting the "Palace." Turniptop, the landlord, strongly asseverates that his hostel forms actual part and parcel of the ancient edifice itself. He appeals in corroboration of his statement in common, oral tradition, to his lease, (which, as that parchment is kept securely locked up in a tin box together with his license, and a copy of the Morning Advertiser containing a report of his famous victory over a malevolent police sergeant who summoned him, A. D. 1850, for an infringement of the law in entertaining the members of the Cauliflower Club after midnight one Saturday, and who was shamefully nonsuited by one of the ablest magistrates that ever sat on the bench,) must be considered testimony irrefragable, but not easily accessible. Turniptop, indeed, puts forward other proofs. He frequently produces a volume of the Mirror for 1832, in which is a woodcut representing an ancient gateway, not in the least resembling the modest brick tenement now licensed as the "Precinct Palace;" and he points triumphantly to a certain jagged stone in the wall, down stairs by the kitchen-boiler, as a relic of mediæval times. By

the way, there is a legend that the whole Precinct was once sacked and burnt by the Kentish rebels under Jack Cade or Wat Tyler, I forget which; and a portion of Turniptopian inspiration may be due to a reminiscence of the man who was wont to point to a brick in the chimney as an unanswerable proof that the house he lived in had once been inhabited by Jack Cade.

That there was once a palace in the Precinct is indubitable. I think that the last personages of importance who occupied it were some ambassadors from the seignory of Venice. I know that in the first decade of the present century the few ruinous walls of the palace that remained, enclosed a kind of enlarged black-hole for deserters and drunken culprits from the Guards, and also an unsavoury Pound or Barracoon, or depôt for recruits. This dismal place was swept away, at about the period of the erection of Waterloo Bridge, and tall brick warehouses were erected on its site. But the Precinct had another more powerful and renowned palatial neighbour. Hard by, to the eastward, although Wellington Street and Lancaster Buildings now stretch between, is the royal property of Proudfoot House. To the moderns it is but a grey, stately mansion surrounding a quadrangle, with an allegory of Father Thames quite dry and looking into a bear-pit in the midst, the whole built by the Anglo-Swede Sir William Chambers; the apartments towards the Strand once giving lodging room to Royal Academicians and Fellows of the Royal Society, but now entirely occupied (with its handsome newly-built wing) by government offices. Few of the spruce clerks, the red-faced messengers, the hot stampers and weighers, the placid old gentlemen who sit in easy-chairs with little to do beyond signing their initials occasionally and drawing fifteen hundred a year regularly—few of these snug civilians know, or would probably care to know, that the site of their quiet offices was once occupied by an Inn of Chancery, by the palaces of the bishops of Chester and Worcester, and by one, if not two churches; and that the parishioners of St. Mary-le-Strand cried out "Sacrilege!" when the temples were razed to build the haughty duke's house. So it was, however; but as I design, some day, to say a few words concerning Proudfoot House, I will dismiss it now with the bare

mention that until the middle of the last century the Precinct—my Precinct—shared with it the curious casualty, not uncommon in royal properties, of an invasion of "squatters." Many old and ruinous houses had been crept into and squatted down in by Bohemian men, and waifs and strays of town life. By degrees, finding themselves, through indifference, undisturbed, they began to let the tenements out to lodgers, called themselves landlords, and exacted rent forsooth, but the lodgers were quite as Bohemian and as cunning in their generation as they; and one of the notable humours of the Precinct a century since was, on the part of the lodgers, to take advantage of the pseudo-landlord's temporary absence to lock him out of the tenement he had squatted in, and, repudiating rent, to defy him from the window to produce a better title than possession, on his return. Thus, the tenure in the Precinct was a mixture of Gavelkind, Borough English, Club law, frankalmoigne, aubaigne, or escheat, and simple burglary. This jocose simplification of conveyancing told immensely; but at last the government, growing weary of the joke, issued a writ of ejectment, called in the posse comitatis and a squad of the Foot Guards, to turn all these unprofitable feudatories out, pulled down the tenements, rebuilt them, and let them to respectable tenants on favourable leases. But for this revolution, the houses in the Precinct would all be as old as a street in Chester, and probably as disorderly as Baldwin's Gardens.

The whole of the Precinct is to be perambulated—the church excepted—in about four minutes and a half; but if you wish to note its daily life, and watch its gaieties and gravities, you must choose summer-time, a fine morning, afternoon, or evening, and select as a point of espial the open window of the Palace up-stairs parlour. To think of the things that I have seen from thence! The church and churchyard are in themselves most edifying spectacles. If you would view the outside of St. Mary-le-Chou aright, look upon it at early morning, ere the working smoke has poisoned and obscured the air, ere that hot, damp, dusty day-cloud has arisen, man's stature high, the cloud that to me is always rife in London streets, and whose presence I ascribe to the perpetual trampling of men's feet, and their thick-panting respiration, seek-

ing gold or glory. At early morn there is not a quoin in the old church's wall, not a mullion in its blinking windows, not a cartouch or a cantaliver, but stands forth sharp and clear in its proper light, shade, and reflexion, as in a Venetian photograph. You shall see the rugosities of the stone as through an opera-glass; you shall count the strands in the cordage of the rigging of the great hayboats far away beyond at Hungerford. This early morning beautifies and enriches everything. As Sydney Smith used to bid his little servant-maid draw up the window-blinds on a sunshiny morning, and "glorify the room," so does the summer sun glorify the hoar old Precinct, and render lovely the ugly modern "improvements" in bricks and boarding. Even the sullen wreaths of smoke that *will* rise—all Smoke-prevention Acts notwithstanding—and accumulate in wreaths and ridges from kilns and furnaces never quenched, in far-off Bermondsey or remote South Lambeth; even this indomitable murk turns golden and cream-coloured when Aurora touches it with her finger-tips. As for the brazen ship-weathercock above St. Mary-le-Chou, it glows now golden bright, now apple-green, now delicate rose, now many-hued and mackerel-backed, like the auriferous dome of Izaak's Church in Petersburg. Away, the clock-tower of Westminster Palace rises, not like a kitchen clock—the guise it wears when you survey it from Bridge Street—but pale pink, shaded and fretted blue, and glittering with golden shafts. At early morn you can discern the dots that mark the minutes, from numeral to numeral, on the dial. Nearer to us one of the gaunt pagodas of Hungerford Bridge is as graceful as a campanile; in the extreme distance ugly wharfs and boat-builders' sheds harmonise and blend into delightful airiness; and in the foreground the tall brick warehouses and simple dwelling-houses, with their white door-steps and green blinds, have rich shadows of bistre and sienna, giving the delicately tinted prospect a massive framing. As for the trees and the grass in the old churchyard—they thrive wondrously for London vegetation, and gather no smoke—they can scarcely be said to be green at early morn. The leaves and herbage seem chameleon-hued. You shall find maize and primrose in their lights, blue and purple in their shadows. Laminæ

of silver play on blades and veins, and, upon my word, I think that on summer nights the Dew falls here—the only dew that is shed in all London, beyond the tears of the homeless.

Such is the Precinct at early morning, and before Lucifer has rung for his shaving-water, and with his cloven foot stamped on the floor to wake his down-stairs neighbour Mammon. The Board of Health have long since sealed the churchyard; but that God's Acre looks, with its white and grey tombstones, so peaceful and so tranquil, that I should not wonder at the sternest opponent of intramural interments leaving directions in his will that application should be made for permission for his dust to be mingled with that of the forefathers of this secluded hamlet. I have incited several artistic friends to bring down easels and drawing-boards, and limn me a picture, or at least a sketch, of St. Mary-le-Chou and the surrounding Precinct; but I am convinced, now, that the only European painter capable of transferring the scene to canvas is Mr. Millais. I am grieved to add, by way of caution, that from any pictorial representations of the Precinct should be excluded sundry high-looming placards bearing inscriptions that relate to Pickles and Sauces, to Pale Ale, and to Durham coals, placards which in their commercial common-place mar the fair prospect. Again, let me remark that, true to my usual habit of looking at the outside of things, I have never yet visited the interior of the church. I hear there are a nobly carved roof-tree, a rare window, and some curious monuments. A mystic-looking old woman potters about the iron gate and the flagged avenue that leads to the principal door. I see her on week days, mostly, and from the battered state of her bonnet and sundry manifestations of brooms and scrubbing-brushes pervading her outward woman, I conjecture her to be the charwoman-housekeeper of the church. I positively saw her sweeping out the churchyard one day, which gave me a pleasant notion of her tidiness. The duties of the incumbent (whom everybody seems to like) must be easy. He knows all the parishioners, and they know him, and the coalies, who are the fortissimi of the Precinct, touch their sou'westers to him as he glides about. There are never any disputes about church-rates that I know of here,—how should there be?

Royalty, I presume, takes care of its own property—and the poor-rates amount to about half a farthing in the pound once in every quarter of a century. The Precinctians go to church with great regularity, but the odium theologicum does not thrive here and the clergyman has not yet decorated his fabric with bouquets of cut carrots and turnips from Covent Garden market. A decent spirit of toleration reigns; and farther down towards the water there is a quaint little Lutheran High Dutch chapel, also possessing its tiny paddock of a churchyard, and watched over by a stout sexton of great gravity of countenance and sobriety of conversation. With two cemeteries within its limits the Precinct might not unreasonably be suspected to be given to ghosts when the moon is up; but then the inhabitants are all so cheerful, and the younger portion are so much addicted to sweethearting by the churchyard rails, that the ghosts wouldn't have a chance, and I suppose have cast themselves in disgust into the Thames, and become pixies, ferriers, and undines.

I hope it is not irreverent on my part to observe that the long cool walks by the churchyard walls have been, and are still, made to serve the interests of the British Drama. I don't mean that the walls are placarded with playbills, or woodcut broadsheets; on the contrary, both beggars and bill-stickers seem banished from the Precinct by a stern though tacit ostracism; but in my early days of Precinctism I used frequently, on week days, to discern sundry clean-shaven, dark-eyed gentlemen, very shiny as to their hats, very spruce and natty as to their attire, who stalked gravely up and down the shady walks, holding small printed books in their hands, which they perused with great earnestness. Their eyes were often upturned, and rolled somewhat, and they occasionally muttered to themselves. Alarmed for the interests of the Church of England and the Protestant Succession, I was at first inclined to surmise that these mysterious persons were hierophants of the Romish persuasion, Oratorians, Jesuits of the short robe, or something of that kind, and that they came hither to read their breviaries as an insidious means of displaying their superior sanctity, and of perverting the peaceful Protestants of the Precinct Popewards. But when as it fell upon a day, brush-

ing the skirts of one of the gentlemen with the shiny hats and the natty garments, and hearing him declaim something about cloud-capped towers and gorgeous pinnacles, and chancing a few days afterwards to meet another shiny and natty student quietly puffing at a snowy pipe, and imbibing cold sherry-and-water in the parlour of the Palace, I made inquiries; I gained information; and I arrived at a more reasonable conclusion. I discovered that these studious gentlemen were actors who came to the Precinct, as an eminently quiet place, *to study their parts*. This accounted for the cloud-capped towers and the gorgeous pinnacles, the shiny hats and the natty coats.

There was a horse, too, that puzzled me sorely ere I graduated in these Precinct mysteries. A brown, ill-groomed, somewhat weak-kneed and wall-eyed quadruped he was; his saddle not handsome, his bridle not bright, but he with a rounded white nose indicating much meekness and docility of character. Every afternoon, till about seven P.M., I used to see him placidly standing in the Precinct, riderless, and tethered to the churchyard rails. What could this horse have been? Was he the Bavicca of some Cid of the Strand who had come here to woo,—I have said how popular sweethearting is in the Precinct,—to love, and to ride away? Was he the solitary sample of equine merchandise offered here in a horse-market held under charter of some Plantagenet kings, but now well-nigh fallen into desuetude? I little knew at the time that this meek-nosed dobbin was a charger of prodigious speed, that he was the renowned horse belonging to the Meteor evening newspaper, the horse that is supposed to publish the third and fourth editions of that post meridian sheet as he careers through the Strand. I met him at last in the City, hot, rampant, covered with foam, a boy and a bundle of newspapers on his back. He enfiladed seemingly impassable blocks-up of carts and carriages. He struck fire from the pavement. He came and there was a clatter; he went and there was steam. And when I returned to the Precinct I found him, as of yore, quietly tethered to the churchyard railings and rubbing his meek nose againt the cool iron.

Little by little I found out the secrets of this charmed spot; but to this day I have not been able to discover why members of

the theatrical orchestras of the metropolis should be so fond of taking afternoon refreshment in the Palace parlour. The Precinct itself is on the wrong side of the way to be in a theatrical neighbourhood: why should the primo violino, the contrabasso, the oboe, and the kettle-drum come hither? To be sure, Garrick lived in the Adelphi, and Doctor Burney in Adam Street, and the House of the Society of Arts is close by; but there must be some deeper reason for this musical affection for the spot than a mere remembrance of dramatic and lyric tradition. Was the Precinct originally built by Old King Cole? Why the typographers from the Meteor and the Orb (the opposition evening journal) should patronise the down-stairs parlour of the Palace is easy of comprehension. The frequenting of the bar by the industrious gentlemen who collect murders, fires, and dreadful accidents on the public behalf, is likewise to be satisfactorily explained, for are not the offices both of the Meteor and the Orb in the busy Strand close by? Again, one knows that there are great brewers and coal-merchants' wharfs at the river extremity, and this at once renders accountable the constant presence of coalheavers and draymen.

They don't make so much noise as might be expected, these coalies and pale-ale tunners. The drags are of course carefully adjusted to the broad wheels of the drays and waggons; the incline to the wharfs is easy; when any Precinctian is dangerously ill, straw is laid down before his door, and the charioteers are enjoined to be careful; and, on the whole, I think the Precinct people like the slow lumbering wains, and regard the drowsy grinding of the wheels at night as a drowsy lullaby. The Precinctians are not much given to the utterance of violent opinions, under any circumstances. They are quiet folks, dwelling peaceably in the little houses, with the white door-steps and the green blinds, which nestle round the church of St. Mary-le-Chou and the Heileger Sauerkraut, High Dutch Lutheran chapel. As to vocation, from the brass plates on their doors, and from their smooth bald heads and subdued whiskers, I take them to be mainly accountants, clerks, retired tradesmen, commission-agents, and employés, interested in pale ale, in pickles, and Wallsend

coals. There is one ancient gentleman, in a white beard and gaiters, who dwells all by himself in a house in a corner, and who, I am certain, is the original "oldest inhabitant," not only of the Precinct, but of the entire liberties of Westminster. He looks old enough to remember Jack Cade and the Kentish rebels. The matrons of the Precinct are ruddy, and given to the wholesome practice of early marketing. Pretty servant maids and handsome daughters abound—the latter not too proud to fetch the dinner and supper beer from the Palace with their own fair hands, and sometimes indulging in a little Platonic sweethearting in the silvery moonlight under the churchyard walls. But Platonic, mind! No goings on, no shocking doings in the chaste and decorous Precinct. The policeman is not popular among the female population. Nigger melodies are never heard. A Life Guardsman once swaggered into the Palace bar—it is true it was Easter time—made a feint of drinking Miss Coppinger's supper half-and-half; winked at Mrs. Turniptop; offered to chuck the barmaid under the chin, and otherwise behaved in a Richelieu and Lovelacian manner, but he was soon frowned down by the landlord and the regular customers. He slunk away at last, and was never seen in the Precinct again. Turniptop, a placable but resolute man when need was, declared that if ever this abandoned dragoon darkened his doors more—such were the terms he used—he would give him a piece of his mind, and, what was more "report" him: threats dreadful to think of!

So run the sands of life through this quiet hour-glass. So glides the Life away in the Old Precinct. At its base, a river runs for all the world; at its summit, is the brawling raging Strand; on either side, are darkness and poverty and vice; the gloomy Adelphi Arches, the Bridge of Sighs, that men call Waterloo. But the Precinct troubles itself little with the noise and tumult, and sleeps well through life, without its fitful fever.

SINCE THIS OLD CAP WAS NEW.

One of the dearest friends I have is pleased to think that he is a staunch Conservative. I say: to think, for in reality he is no more a Tory than I am; but he is a quiet man, and somewhat timorous and shrinking, and much preferring to go without than to ask for things. A Reformer must be always asking for things, and in a pretty loud tone of voice, too. There are some Rights and Liberties which it is expedient not to beg the next gentleman, in a soft tone of voice, to pass, but to stretch our hands boldly across the table, and take. Still my friend fancies himself a Conservative. He deprecates the anarchical tendencies of the age, thinks the people don't want any more Parliamentary Reform; opines that education has done more harm than good to the masses, and that national schools have ruined the breed of domestic servants; he admires the landed proprietary as the best and wisest of mankind, and winces when you reduce the Duke of Grafton's pension and the Duke of St. Alban's falconry sinecure to their abstract merits. He is for Finality; sets up his flagstaff like Constantine's standard-bearer with a "Here we had better remain," and opines, that if the army continues its progress, it must march eventually to the devil. They are perfectly harmless, these sentimental Conservatives, cherishing a generous, chivalrous merry England, every rood of ground-maintaining-its-man Idea, that seems to be clothed in a blue coat, brass buttons, and top-boots; but it is only an Idea, like the Jacobite and Cavalier figments. Do you think Professor Aytoun would like to meet Grahame of Claverhouse in the flesh? Do you think Prince Charlie was at all "bonny" to the valet who helped him to bed, tipsy, or to the lady favourites whom he kicked and beat? The way in which I usually confute my sentimental Conservative is

this. I ask him: "Would you like to have Grampound and Gatton, the Admiralty Droits and the Pension List, the Test and Corporation Acts, and the Penal Laws against the Catholics, thousand-lashes-by-court-martial sentences, the Alien Bill, the Spy system, the Corn Laws, yeomanry butcheries, Lord Eldon's Chancery Court, the Gagging and Sedition Laws, and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus back again? For these were all pure Toryisms in their time, and their removal was deprecated by Tories as conscientious and as honourable as yourself; if they were removed, sentimentalists said, thirty years ago, the tide must inevitably roll onward—and to the deuce of course." No; my friend would not have them back, but he would stop, now. "Insensate," I cry, "shallow man, whose horizon is at the tip of your aquiline nose: we *cannot* stop. We must obey the Law. Every obstruction, to the minutest point of social life, is Toryism, and its removal is Reform. In sheer shame and craving for a reputation for consistency, the persons who call themselves Tories adhere to certain broad articles of Tory faith in politics, but they vindicate their humanity and common sense by working sedulously for social reforms. The only genuine Tories are the Very Old, who should be tenderly dealt with and left to their harmless reminiscences. The rest I take to be mainly Humbugs or Sentimentalists."

We do not quarrel, my sentimental friend and I, albeit we are both hot of temper and hasty of speech. My adversary cannot argue unless he smokes. And as he never can preserve an incandescent tip to his cigar, a half-accomplished angry phrase, such as "Sir, you are imper——," or "Your language is becom——," is frequently cut short by a placid request for a light. Moreover, he is given to caressing his moustache and to humming opera tunes; and it is difficult under those circumstances for a man to get very much enraged.

It was recently after one of these discussions that, at home, I took a fair sheet of paper and endeavoured to work out my theory that we cannot stand still—no, not for one instant, no, not any more than can the blood within the veins or the seed within the earth—by jotting down some new things whose ad-

vent I can remember as having taken place "since this old cap was new." It is not such a very long time ago that the cap was new and glossy, and had a glazed peak and a golden band to it. It is not such a very old cap now, though it has seen some service; but it is not the cap it was, and never will be more. I tried to recollect the things to which we have grown so accustomed in our daily lives, and which have become so much necessaries of our daily lives, that usance has begotten familiarity, and if that has not bred contempt, has engendered, at least, indifference. And with some reference of retrospect to a paper I wrote eight years since in this periodical's predecessor, called "Things Departed." I taxed my memory to enumerate the things among us, which have been born and grown strong and lusty and become affiliated to our households and are of them now, since this old cap was new. The wonder is, that, using them so much at present, we could ever have done without them. Haven't analogous thoughts ever struck you going over that wonderful Pompeian House in the Crystal Palace? haven't you puzzled yourself almost involuntarily as to how the ancients managed without a Manchester for the spinning of their toga-stuffs, without printing-presses to disseminate the poetical works of Messrs. Ovid, Horace, and Virgil? without steam-engines to pump and heat and carry away the water of the great Thermæ? The best corrective of this uneasy sensation of wonderment is, first, to remember that an Almighty Providence was just as busy two thousand years ago in fitting backs to burdens, tempering winds to shorn lambs, opening doors when others were shut, and making days sufficient for the evil thereof, as now; and, at a reverent distance of appreciation, to recall the pleasant enumeration of appliances of life which Sydney Smith remembered since *his* old cap was new. Gas, steam, braces, coach-springs, lucifer matches, are all things of which the good canon of St. Paul's had seen the birth and progress; and yet Mr. Pitt lived without them. Sir Isaac wrote the Principia without them. Johnson finished the Dictionary, and Sir Joshua painted his deathless portraits, without them. Sir Joshua! why he hadn't any meguilp, any patent capsuled colour tubes, any prepared canvas from Winsor and New-

ton's; yet he managed, somehow, to produce Master Braddock and the Strawberry Girl.

Since this old cap was new, I have seen railways. Huskisson had been killed and George Stephenson had walked over Chat Moss, and with his son had built the great-great-grandmother of locomotives, the "Rocket;" but there were no London railway termini when this old cap was new. Mr. Perkins's steam-coach, a cumbrous yellow concern with the chimney belching black smoke at the rear, a man tugging at the steering apparatus in front, the outsides clinging on for dear life, and the insides looking from the windows with scared faces—this famous machine grated about the New Road, somewhere between Paddington Green and the "Yorkshire Stingo," to the wonderment of mankind and the despair of the commissioners of turnpike trusts. I was reminded, oddly enough, of the steam coach, only yesterday, when I met a huge lumbering Bonassus of a locomotive, dragging some tons of trucks behind it, and staggering in a vacant manner about Agar Street, Strand. It was called, I believe, a Traction Engine, and will, no doubt, be useful in its generation; but it was a sight not to be forgotten to mark the scorn with which a smart Hansom cabman, who was compelled to draw up behind it, surveyed the entire concern from chimney to tender, and the impotent rage with which the monkey in the court suit, who stands on the tripod and fences with his Italian proprietor, and who was then going through his entertainment at the corner of King William Street, gibbered and shook his lean paw at the dusky mass. Perhaps the monkey and the cabman, all unconscious of the impeachment, were Conservatives, and perceived that this exceedingly ugly and awkward Traction Engine meant progress in the rough, after all. For are we not to have side-walk railroads, midway railroads, underground railroads, and flying railroad bridges, like the bamboo causeways over Hindoo ghauts, some of these days? There were none of them when this old cap was new. London Bridge, Paddington, King's Cross, Waterloo, Shoreditch stations, existed not. How the world slid into railway life is a marvel of marvels. The world's people woke up one morning and found themselves in a train. A railway language, with a complete

grammar, dictionary, and *Gradus ad Parnassum*, seems to start up ready made. Whence came—though Dean Trench would tell us, I dare say—those strange terms "shunting," "sidings," "switches," "points," "buffers," "stokers," "sleepers," "brakesmen," and the like? At what time of day was it that people left off saying half-past twelve, and called the half-hour following noon "twelve thirty?" Who could have been the first sage who devised the model of a first-class carriage? There is, decidedly, originality in the conception of those scroll-like padded partitions and arm rests; yet very slight alterations have taken place in the English railway train since its first appearance, sudden and ready made, like Cinderella's coach and horses, from the pumpkin. The lamp in the roof, and the rack for sticks and umbrellas, have been added, with some trifles in the way of interior gilding and flower painting; and, when this old cap was new, the second-class carriages on the Great Western Railway were open at the sides, and protected only by leathern curtains, while the third-class carriages, as a rule, were the mere seatless and unsheltered cattle-trucks that still linger on the road from London to Greenwich. Again, it is since this old cap had lost a considerable extent of its bran-newness that railway stations have become galleries of art, and that waiting-rooms, platform walls, and even panels formed in the sides of cuttings, have been decorated with monstrous cartoons having reference, in the most floridly pictorial manner, to the language of the eye—which, so far as its advertising eloquence is concerned, mentions very plainly the name of Mrs. Elizabeth Martin—to food for cattle, perambulators, Arabian bedsteads, Sydenham trousers (which I have yet to learn are true to their name in being constructed of iron and glass), and other ingenious devices of that which was a trade when this old cap was new, but which, fostered by the immortal Warren and the incomparable Rowland, has now grown into an elaborate science —and a very offensive, impertinent science too—tending chiefly to the glorification of impudence and the success of lies. Beyond these particulars, railways seem not much to have altered since the cap was new. The same old by-laws, approved by "Granville" and "Edward Ryan," stare one in the face in the entrance

halls. Our railway companies have not yet been able to manage a decent proportion of smoking carriages, and the consumer of a cigar is still obliged to go through a process of genteel fraud and elegant bribery and corruption, at the risk of being pounced upon and denounced by a disguised director reading the *Edinburgh Review* in the corner. Hot water cases in first-class carriages in winter are as yet (generally speaking) institutions too subversive for the squeamish nerves of the directors; and, though I suppose improvements have gone on in the engineer's department till perfection is the result, the engine, with the exception of the huge pair of glass goggles in front of the driver, looks about the same machine as of yore; nor do I hear that railway signals answer much better, or that any important steps have been taken to ensure a proper communication between the guard and the driver since this old cap was new.

Yet the marvels are marvellous, notwithstanding. Since this old cap was new, I have torn down to Brighton by the express in sixty minutes. I have written a column of close "copy" in a *coupé;* I have been swept over the houses on the Surrey side—a day Asmodeus—and have seen what the good folks of Lambeth and Vauxhall have had for dinner. I have seen a queen making her progress by railway, and judges going circuit, and coffins going to the cemetery, and murderers going to be hanged, likewise, per rail. Who takes any account of these wonders? We are used to them; and was it not one of the shrewdest remarks made in his well-known treatise of "Stokers and Pokers," by Sir Francis Head, that when railways were first started, cows and sheep and horses used to scamper away as fast as ever their legs could carry them, at the mere sound of the advancing train, whereas, now, you can't get the cows off the line; and the dappled dobbins wink lazily, without a whisk of the tail or a lifting of the hoof, as the four o'clock express screams and rushes by! New classes of houses and people, new types of life and character, have sprung up about railway termini since this old cap was new. The guard is a character, with not a single element of the old mail guard in him. He could not sound a horn if he were paid for it. The driver, the stoker, are characters. Watch their

the railway station, with his rapid shuffle, keeping pace with the moving train, his astonishing shrill slurring of the names of newspapers, such as *Saturday Review* into "Sarriew," and *All the Year Round* into "Arryeound;" his arms, which must possess a preternatural faculty of elongation, and so reach to the furthermost recesses of carriages from the off window; and his mouth, which appears to contain an inexhaustible supply of small change; this curious, red-comfortered, sharp-spoken youth resembles no other boy that I can remember when this old cap was new. The young lady in the refreshment room is not in the least like the tavern or hotel barmaid; and who will tell me that railway tea or railway soup bears the remotest assimilation to the refreshments under those titles obtained elsewhere? There is something, too, about the whiskers of a station-master, of which the world was not aware when this old cap was new. The odd little streets of low-browed, feverish brick houses, the railway hotels, railway coffee-houses and reading-rooms, that are circumjacent to the termini, have all a peculiar stamp and significance about them. Even railway vans and railway trucks are not the things we recollect long years ago. And yet people used to have vans and trucks, even then.

If you will take any one well-frequented, prosperous street in this metropolis, and ponder and be patient a little, a flood of things, quite new since the first wearing of that cap of yours, will come upon you. Try and remember a street as you saw it in eighteen twenty-nine, or, as I saw it in eighteen thirty-nine. What strange novelties eighteen fifty-nine offers to our inspection! Look at the photographs. Could we do without photography now? And yet when the gloss was on the cap we could only go, if we wanted our portraits taken, to the gentleman in Soho or Fitzroy Square, who painted us in oils, with the column, the curtain, or the cut orange on the plate, with an unnatural

shirt collar, clothes too new for us, and eyes staring into vacancy. For miniatures, there was the fashionable artist in a shawl dressing-gown and a Turkish cap, who stippled us up in ivory, with pink eyes like a white rabbit or an albino, an elaborate gold chain round our necks, and a highly finished Buhl inkstand with a great quill pen to break the background on the curiously arabesqued table-cloth. Cheaper performances "in this style" were undertaken by modest practitioners, who dwelt in second floors of the Strand or Oxford Street, and exhibited gold frames full of specimens on the street door; simpering ensigns in scarlet, and languishing ladies with low-necked dresses, evidently copies in water-colours from the *Book of Beauty*. Photography has swept all these poor mediocre artists away. Some, the better section, have started up again as first-class photographers, or find employment in colouring to miniature texture the productions of the sun and lens. Others, the more inferior, take photographs, abominable in quality, for sixpence and a shilling, in vile little slums; Sunday being their great market day: there are legions of people abroad on the Sabbath who have their portraits taken for want of something better to do. Some, the very worst, may have sunk into the touters who stand at the doors in the aforesaid slums, with shilling specimens in their grimy hands, wheedling or bullying the passers-by to come into their masters' murky studios and be libelled on glass. And some, poor wretches, for aught I know, may be picking up sorry crumbs as photographees, sitting as models for the personages in those stereoscopic slides which look so curiously like life, and so hideously unlike it, showing their bleared faces and crinolines and legs, and playing their miserable antics for a penny wage. Most noteworthy feature of the things that have taken possession of London since this old cap was new is this stereoscopic mania. It is very good, I think, to look on marvellous transcripts of nature, to peep through two little holes at a scrap of cardboard, and say: There are the Grands Mulets, there is the Court of Lions, there is the Alameda of Seville, not to have seen which is not to have seen a wonder. There is Mount Hor, there the Mount of Olives, there the church of the Sepulchre, there the place of Job's tribulation—not as painters

and poets have imagined them, but in their actual, terrible reality —barren, sunburnt, arid, desolate. See; that little speck among a thousand heads is Queen Victoria. By her side is Eugénie, in a white bonnet; that little dark streak is the real life-like twist of the moustache of his Imperial Majesty Napoleon III. These are not phantoms; they are real, and the sun cannot lie. It is good, I say, to look into these magic mirrors, and the reflective man may glean many and salutary lessons from them; but how does it stand when we come to photograph humanity tortured into the similitude of an ape, or caricatured into sham angels and sham ghosts? What a cold, pallid glare is thrown by the stereoscope on the deliberate indecencies the knaves have striven to perpetrate. Faugh! take away this miserable wresting of sunbeams, this forcing them to irradiate dust-heaps and sewers.

Not to be denied, however, is this great fact of photography: very potent and various in its usefulness at this time—and all since this old cap was new! It has taken giant strides from its little dim cradle, full of misty shadowings of corpse-like colour, and distorted parts called daguerreotypes. Photography is everywhere now. Our trustiest friends, our most intimate enemies, stare us in the face from collodionised surfaces. Sharp detectives have photographs of criminals of whom they are in search. Foreign police agents speculate upon the expediency of having the portraits of travellers photographed on their passports. People are photographed on their visiting cards, or have tiny albuminised portraits of themselves in the crowns of their hats. There are photographs so minute as to be invisible, save under the microscope. They photograph infants and dead people. I was in Bedlam the other day, and the kind physician showed me an album full of photographs of the mad folks. There was Case XVI., raving in acute mania, hair erect, eyes starting, muscles distorted, mouth convulsed, hands clenched, limbs thrown here and there; and lo! on the opposite page was Case XVI. again, in a lucid interval, clean shaven, prim, demure, with an irreproachable collar, a white neckcloth, and a faultlessly buttoned coat. Could the old mad doctors ever have dreamed of this, among the phantasma of chains, manacles, gags, whips, and whirligig chairs,

among which they kept the stricken people! What sore and terrible an astonishment photography would have been to them in the days when their old caps and three-cornered hats, their powdered wigs, and golden-headed canes were new. This photography seems an obedient slave, and has never claimed any fierce or arrogant mastery. It has never blown any one up, or rent anybody asunder, or maimed anybody; though a skilful photographer tells me that the art may yet exact such penalties for extreme rashness or dense stupidity. The worst harm it has wreaked has been to stain a few manipulators' finger-tips a little. It is not free from vice: witness those semi-ribald stereoscopes; but it abhors the crimes of violence. My cap is but middle-aged, but when it is in truth old, and covers a bald, wrinkled head, what marvels may not have been added to photography! Of course it is in its infancy. Steam, you know, is in its infancy. So is ballooning. So is cotton-spinning machinery. Crompton's mules and Hargreave's spinning-jennies will be preserved as curiosities in museums some day. And we go maundering on about things being in their infancy in this old old world, till our hair falls off and our teeth fall out, and we, too, are in our infancy, and Goody Crossbones comes and tucks us up, and gives us a spoonful of that Daffy's Elixir which lasts us till Trumpet-time.

Gutta-percha is another of the things that have been manifest in street shops, since this old cap was new. We got on very well without it, as the generation that preceded us got on without india-rubber; but it is the old story over again, and gutta-percha is now a necessary of life. I hope there is a huge underground store of slabs of the material somewhere kept in reserve like the bullion in the Bank cellars, for if the supply were to fail we should soon have to sing the song "It's O! what will become of us! O! what shall we do?" Gutta-percha soles for boots and shoes, gutta-percha picture-frames and images, gutta-percha baths, pipkins, vases, toys, cups-and-balls, goblets, life-preservers. And twenty years since, nobody had heard of gutta-percha, or knew where the Gutta-percha Islands (if any) were. Gutta-percha is in immense request for walking-sticks and riding-whips, and, ah! it is strange how very soon mankind become

habituated to things that can be turned to a wicked and cruel use. Within eighteen months after the introduction of this useful substance into civilised life, a woman was tried in India for the murder of a child by beating it to death with a gutta-percha whip. *She* had found out the tough, pliant qualities of gutta-percha in a trice—the Jezebel. But it has been turned to nobler purposes, and married to substances as marvellous. See yon dandy who, among the charms at his watch-guard, carries what appears to be a little cylinder of chocolate, with tiny pips or spangles of copper at the summit and base. That is a tiny toy fragment of the Atlantic cable, wire incased and isolated by gutta-percha. Once, twice, the great attempt has failed, but it will be renewed again, and must eventually succeed. The Atlantic cannot suffer the puny British Channel, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean, to laugh her to scorn. The cable must be laid, and gutta-percha and wire safely submerged beneath the roaring waves will tremble at the thoughts of men, and carry from world to world the tidings of the greatest marvel that has been accomplished since the oldest human cap was new.

It would be easy to multiply examples, but who would have the patience to listen to them? Some doctors tell us that we change our corporeality once in every seven years, and that we have not the same bones, muscles, sinews, that we had then. 'Tis as certain that our lives themselves are changed, and in the manner of them different every year, as that the days follow and do not resemble one another. "Where is the life that once I led?" sings madcap Petruchio in the play. Where, indeed, are the lives we have led? We can live them no more, no, not one iota, one moment, one fractional spark of their time again. I set little store by Fashion and its changes, by the sleeves that were long yesterday having given way to the sleeves that were short thirty years ago. Once the "Lancers" as a dance was fashionable, then it sank into desuetude, then it was revived again, and became doubly fashionable. This chopping and changing and wheeling about, and coming back again to the starting-point, is worthy of Fashion: fashion in dress, diet, reading, and the bowing and scraping customs of society. But this paper would have been written in

vain had I not endeavoured to maintain that we see every year and every day, new things, that are built up on the ruins of the effete and useless past, that suffer opposition for a time, but progress, and wax strong in the land, and ultimately obtain and prevail. Our state is no millennium, Heaven in its justice knows; but every year sees a bad old thing disappear, and something new and smiling in its place. Not that the new things are perfect. Damp and unseasoned as in their youth they must be, the weeds and fungus and mildew will cover them with lightning rapidity if the greatest vigilance be not displayed. Witness railways, photography, gutta-percha, all attacked by foul parasitical plants almost so soon as they were known. But it is the greatest argument against Finality that few things stand so much in need of Reforming as Reform itself. When there is nothing left to Reform and we have Perfection, not in sentimental theory, but in truthful practice, Conservatives and Radicals may shake hands, for the Millennium will have arrived, and the caps that were old shall be made new again.

THE SHADOW OF THE REIGN OF TERROR.

If a quiet, well-to-do citizen of London were to come into town some morning, from Camberwell or Dalston, and, walking down Cheapside, find the shops closed, and their shutters perforated with grape-shot; Bow Church a mass of smoking ruins; barricades, more formidable than the brewers' drays and coal carts of his peaceable daily experience, blocking up Wood Street and Old 'Change; infantry bivouacking in Saint Paul's Church Yard, and a troop of horse littered down in the choir of the Cathedral; proclamations of denunciations and proscriptions posted on the church-doors in lieu of the list of voters, and the schedules of the assessed taxes; if he were to find the entrance to his counting-house blocked up by mutilated corpses, and blood laid on to his cisterns instead of water; if, on 'Change, instead of Jones with his opened snuff-box, and Smith with his quotations of "Mexican Defenced," and Brown with his "latest prices of pig-iron," he were to be accosted by savage ruffians, grimed with gunpowder and leoparded with clotted blood, who bade him, with horrid oaths, drink to "Anarchy, One and Invisible," or forced him to assume a red worsted night-cap in lieu of his sober beaver; if inflamed soldiers—half drunk with brandy and half with blood, were to run at him with fixed bayonets, and shoot or stab him, just to keep their hands in; if the "Latest Intelligence" of the *Times* were only to contain the latest number of heads that had fallen, or of houses that had been burnt the day before; I wonder, under the circumstances, what that Citizen of London would say, or think, or do? But, should the bare idea, even, of such a state of things occur to this worthy Citizen, at this present time of day, as he is pleasantly totting up his banker's book, with the know-

ledge of a comfortable balance in the hands of Messrs. Shovel, Till, Chink, and Co., with a dinner-ticket for the Annual Festival of the Worshipful Company of Bellows Menders lying beside him on his desk, with engagements to attend that day at a paving board, a coal and blanket distributing society, and a soup kitchen committee, I don't think that Citizen would do very wrong in going down on his knees (mentally, of course) and thanking a merciful Heaven, that our dear country had been so long spared the spectacle of the horrors of Civil War.

I have seen these things: these—the pageants of Anarchy's black Vespers. But even those who have seen and can remember the dreadful scenes of the days of July, the days of February, the days of June, and the days of December, must fail in realising to themselves a definite idea of what the Reign of Terror, during the Great Revolution, resembled. It is difficult even to an Englishman to form a distinct notion of the actual, social, aspect of War. We read in a *Gazette* of a great battle fought some miles off; cheer, illuminate, hoist flags, and confer Peerages and Companions of the Bath, according to established usage; but the war comes not to our own doors. We cannot see the windows smashed by the concussion of the cannonaded air; the harvest trodden down and burnt up; the ruts in the roads made by the cannon-wheels; the wells poisoned with bodies; the sun that putrifies instead of fertilising; the pigs fattened with human flesh; the hordes of brigands that follow in the wake of the army, like vultures or jackals, to devour, rob, and murder, at all points; the weeping women and cursing peasantry. Armies, to us, only march and counter-march on paper; the real army—whose real march is that of a crawling, poisonous serpent, leaving a deadly slime of rapine, murder, plunder, and general demoralisation behind it wherever it goes, we cannot see. Much less can we embody a graphic conception of intestine commotion. We have had our Civil Wars; but their memories, happily, have moulded to dust with the brave but misguided men who fell in their desperate affrays. It is only here and there, in the chancel of a country church, where hangs some dinted cuirass, some rusted head-piece, some shattered broadsword, some old cannon-ball

suspended by a chain; only at some old town bridge, which we are told the Scots were driven over in '45; some quaint, thatched timber house, pointed out as the head-quarters of Charles-Edward, that we can gather (save from books) even a hint of the sorrowful wicked past. The wound of Civil War has been healed over in England this many a day, and not a scar remains behind. Edgehill is a railway station; factory chimneys dominate over Wigan Lane; and white-surpliced choristers sing, and grave divines preach, in the fatal Banqueting-house, from the windows of which Charles Stuart, King of England, went to his doom.

I have been wading lately through a mass of French newspapers, published during the Reign of Terror—through infamous journals, that should have been printed in blood and mud upon shrouds, and that read like playbills of Mortality—the *Père Duchesne*, the *Implacable*, the *Bouche de Fer*, the *Voix du Peuple*, the *Sans-culotte*, the *Veto*, the *Nouvelle Ere*, together with *Republiques*, *Gazettes*, *Amis*, *Citoyens*, and *Défenseurs*, innumerable. Many of the titles of these newspapers were revived in 1848 by those amiable patriots who wished to return to the Golden Age of the Guillotine; and after a few months the *Père Duchesne** used to be "enraged" as was his wont, and the *Bouche de Fer* thundered, and the *Voix du Peuple* screamed forth (under the tutelage of M. Proudhom) a hoarse carmagnole of socialism. I have been assisted, during my perusal of the interesting documents, by the admirable works of Messieurs Jules and Edmond de Goncourt upon the state of French Society during the Revolution. Together, these awful pages make a man see red; yet, with horror, there is mingled astonishment at the existence of a species of ghastly and fantastic merriment in the very midst of the Terrorist Jacquerie —of a gibbering, mocking, hideous joviality, that played about like a *ignis fatuus* upon the crimson corpses of French Society. Let me endeavour to recall some of the phantoms of the Days

* The *Père Duchesne* was a newspaper remarkable for the brutal violence of writing displayed in its columns; and it grew to be a sort of sinister joke to ask, "*Le Père Duchesne, est-il bien enragé ce Matin?*" "Is Father Duchesne very enraged this morning?"

of Terror—the minor social ones; the great events, the monster butcheries and noyades, I leave to the historians.

This is a winter's afternoon in 1793. This is the Great Place, the finest expanse in Europe, once called the Place Louis Quinze, now called the Place de la Revolution, afterwards to be known as the Place de la Concorde. Here is the scaffold and here is the guillotine. I need not tarry minutely to describe the hideous machine. Everybody knows the two upright posts, the pillory between them, the horizontal plank, the axe, shaped to an acute angle, loaded with lead at the top, and sliding down between two grooves, and the long basket painted red, and filled with sawdust, to receive the head. In Citoyen Samson, the executioner's little bills, in accounts between him and the Commune de Paris, you will find items of "*Chandelles pour graisser la rainure*"—candles to lubricate the grooves; "sorn," or sawdust; and "pourboires," or drams, for his assistants. Citoyen Samson is the only gentleman left in Paris; he and his Confrères in the provinces are the only men in France whose heads are safe upon their shoulders. Citoyen Samson has even preserved that thing most abominable in Republican eyes and Republican noses—a little. Prince, archbishops, nobles, have been stripped of their designations; priests have been unfrocked; heraldic achievements pulled down; the king degraded to Louis Capet; "*Aristocrates*" of every description have mounted the fatal platform, from aristocratic marquises to aristocratic barbers that dressed their heads; the very pronunciation of "Monsieur" or "Madame" has become a crime; but Citoyen Samson is "Monsieur de Paris" still. He is his own herald—his cognizance a head decollated, proper, on a field gules—and none can rob him of his title. It appears, in defiance to liberty, equality, and fraternity, in his little bills to the commune: "*A Monsieur*," *pour son* DROIT, 25 *francs*. Mark the words—*pour son droit*—for his RIGHT. He is the Seigneur, the Suzerain of the portcullis gate of death, and haughtily claims a toll of all who pass through it—of those who send them through it at least. Twenty-five francs are "Monsieur's" right for a single "patient," as the victim is called; but the commune will insist upon

retrenchment shortly. Monsieur Samson will have to learn the commercial necessity of "making a large reduction on taking a quantity." The number of "patients" increases daily. It was only on the twenty-fifth of April, 1792, that the invention,* or at the least the adaption of the Doctor Guillotine, was inaugurated in Paris by the execution of a wretched man condemned for rape; on the twenty-sixth of August in the same year, it received its first political victim in the person of Collenot d'Augremont; now the guillotine is doing its ten, fifteen, thirty patients a day. The crowd, becoming jocular, sometimes called M. Samson's "*pratiques*"—his customers. By the twentieth of April, 1794, the diurnal number of "patients" or "pratiques" will have amounted to forty, fifty, sixty; *upon one day it will reach the horrifying number of seventy-two!* Then, an adventurous spirit—a bold patriot—a sucking Cromwell, as yet guiltless of his country's blood, but anxious to be over heels and boots in it without further delay, will submit a proposition to the National Convention for the construction of an "improved guillotine," that will cut off *nine heads at once!* His letter of proposal, couched in a commendable strain of patriotism, but in indifferent, not to say execrable, orthogaphy, will be extant half-a-century hence in the national archives [it is now]; but the Government and Convention, somehow, will not incline their ears to his proposition. The "nine-at-once" patriot will be no more heard of; perhaps he will be guillotined by the slower but equally efficacious one-at-a-time machine. It is one of the few great facts left in the general disruption of society—this guillotine. It is no less a fact, that the people are fond of it, though it may destroy them to-morrow; that, for the moment, it is their peculiar institution, their chief and favourite amusement. The Roman Plebeians cried out, "Panem et circenses!" and, having them, were satisfied. The watchword of the emancipated negroes in Saint Domingo was, according to Barrière, "Liberty and sweet potatoes:" that of the Parisian populace, during

* MM. de Goncourt have seen in the Grand Salle at Nuremburg a mediæval fresco of a machine in construction and operation, almost exactly resembling the guillotine as it at present exists.

the Terror, would seem to be "Bread and the guillotine." If they had all the blood in the world poured out on the Place de la Révolution, and were asked, "What next?" they would cry with the sailor and his "More baccy"—"More blood!" It is a Fact, that fathers bring their children hither to see the bloody spectacle, and hold them on their shoulders, above the crowd, for a better view, saying, "*Vois-tu bien, mon enfant?*"—"Canst thou see well, my child?" It is a Fact that, that there are flying guillotines, with flying executioners, travelling about the provinces, and executing country aristocrats with promptitude and dispatch. It is a Fact, that at dinner-tables fowls are decapitated with miniature guillotines. It is a Fact, that some wretch, with fiendish mockery, fits up a guillotine with a musical box, and that the deadly axe descends to the tune of "*Ca ira!*" and "*Adieu donc, Dame Françoise.*" It is a Fact, that the guillotine is made into a toy for children, and is engraved on drinking-glasses [I have one representing the execution of Louis Seize], and that the women of Bordeaux wear little jewelled guillotines for ear-rings; that one of the Republican Generals has a guillotine cut on his signet ring. It is a Fact, that there are "*coiffures à la guillotine,*" and cakes, and dishes, and boots "*à la guillotine,*" as before the Revolution there were waistcoats *couleur feu de l'opera*—of a hue supposed to approximate to the Conflagration of the Opera-house. It is a Fact, that dogs come in droves to lap the blood that flows from the scaffold, and are not driven away; that ladies come in their carriages [such ladies and such carriages as are left in this Woeful Terror] to see the executions; that the great painter David sits at the foot of the scaffold, his easel before him, and his paint brushes in his hand, to catch the exact hue of Agony as it lives, and Death as it dies. It is a Fact, that in the tumbrils that come rumbling up to the scaffold and disgorge their inmates penned up during their weary journey like sheep or calves, there are thieves and murderers, forgers of *assignats*, idiots, madmen, children, paralytic cripples, and men nearly a hundred years of age. That there are men who bow to the right and the left before they are tied to the fatal plank—men who quarrel with the executioner because they

are not slaughtered in their proper turn—men who read epigrams and acrostics, and look admiringly round for applause—men who solve mathematical problems—holy nuns who go to execution singing hymns, and in the very tumbril strive to awaken a spark of penitence in the breasts of the most depraved and wretched outcasts of womankind; whom, for the first and last time, a common doom has made their companions and their equals—young girls in white, with rosebuds in their bosoms, riding to death, smiling. It is a Fact, that one day, a man condemned to death for atrocious crimes, stands up in a cart-full of aristocrats, and cries to the crowd, "My friends, I am no aristocrat; I—I am a robber and a murderer; I—*Vive la Liberté!*—I am a murderer and a robber. Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity!" pluming himself the while like any peacock; whereupon a whitehaired old nobleman, his companion in misfortune, says mildly to him, "*Tais toi, mon enfant; ce n'est pas le temps pour la vanité!*"

These tumbrils have come, this wintry afternoon, in slow but noisy procession, along the quays, up the long Rue St. Denis, along the tortuous and sombre Rue St. Honoré, from all parts of Paris; from the Conciergerie, the Abbaye, the Bourse, the Salpetrière, the Temple, the Force, the Port Libre, the Madelonnettes, the Capuchins, St. Lazare, the Irish Benedictines; from nearly every convent, palace, and hospital in the capital; from the *thirty-five* prisons that now exist in Paris. Thirty-five prisons! eighteen months since, there were but five in all Paris! These tumbrils are escorted by Gendarmes, Republican Guards, Communal Guards, and by half-naked drunken men and women, armed to the teeth by stolen weapons, who are anybody's guards whose hue is sufficiently black.

Every now and then the *cortége* stops, for some red-capped patriot to yell a rhapsody upon liberty, and insult the condemned, from the top of a rush-bottomed chair; or for the guards to make a foray into and half pull down some shop, the proprietor of which, in terror or disgust, has closed his shutters; or for the crowd to dance the *carmagnole*, and howl some Republican lyric.

In the prisons of Paris, about this time in the afternoon, there are confined about nine thousand prisoners, men and women.

In the spring of next year, on the twenty-fifth of April, seventeen hundred and ninety-four, the number of prisoners will exceed *eleven* thousand. Of these nine thousand now in prison, not twenty prisoners know but what they may be carted to the scaffold within twenty-four hours; yet the prisons are not entirely places of sorrow, of gloom, of despair. Wondrously, in those dark cells and narrow corridors has taken refuge very nearly all that remains of religion, of learning, of generosity, in France. The worship of the Almighty has been superseded by the Convention, and the blasphemous *culte* of the Goddess of Reason has been substituted for it; some argumentative atheist has even gravely broached the question in a pamphlet, "*Dieu est-il Aristocrat?*" but in the prisons priests yet celebrated mass, and the consecrated elements are partaken of by devout communicants. In the prisons there are writers of sonnets and *nocturnes* and *ritournelles*, and there are *salons*—yes, *salons*—though damp, fetid prison wards, where the men club their candles at night and the ladies bring their work; where the sonnets and *nocturnes* and *ritournelles* are recited and sung, and where criticisms are lisped, and shoulders shrugged, and prizes adjured. There are prison *bon-mots* passed from captive to captive every morning; prison news; prison intrigues and scandals; prison reputations won and lost. There are prison drinking songs, such as "*C'est demain mon jour de barbe!*" ("To-morrow is shaving day!") sung on the eve of a prisoner's trial, or rather of his appearance before the Revolutionary Committee, with the almost certitude of the ferocious Fouquier Tinville, the Public Accuser, rising, and, after a few violent phrases, ending with—"I demand this citizen's head!"—a demand generally acquiesced in, and followed by a night more in prison; and the next day the tumbril, the plank, and the sawdust basket. Bailly has a little song of his own, which he sings, rubbing his hands, "*Petit bonhomme vit encore*" ("There's life in the little man yet"); and he can sing while the Convention only keep him alive and in prison in order to prolong his agony. There are prison quarrels and prison duels. There are prison beauties who enchant, distract, and fascinate for a day, and then go off to be guillotined. There are prison balls, prison suppers,

Who has not heard of the supper of the Girondins? There are prison levees, when *ex-employés* call to pay their respects to ex-ministers (I quote MM. de Goncourt), and ex-ministers punctiliously return the visit; their shoes scrupulously polished, their hair accurately arranged and powdered, and their hats under their arms. *Vanitas Vanitatum!* Where will Vanity not find a refuge? See it here, half robbing the grave of its victory, disputing with Philosophy in plucking out the sting of Death!

Outside the prison, there stands all day crowds of the prisoners' relatives and friends,*—patient, loving, and unwearying crowds, who will wait uncomplaining for hours, bearing meekly hunger, thrist, the rain, the insults, the scoffs, blows of brutal guards—in the hope of being able to transmit to the dear ones within some little comfort, some word of hope, some trifling article of apparel, in the hope even of hearing in some coarse expletive from a guardian that the prisoner they seek is still in his prison. *There* he is safe. Beyond it, is no liberty but the grave. Every favour, however trifling, must be obtained by bribery. So much for the transmission of a loaf; so much for a bottle of wine; so much for a vial of medicine; so much for a clean shirt; so much, and a heavy—heavy price indeed, for a letter; and more, heaviest taxed of all, for the safe conduct of some sure and trusty weapon —a small pistol, a poinard, a sharp nail, a flask of poison. This is the greatest boon of all to many of the nine thousand. The prisoner can then choose the manner of his death, and say to the guillotine—"Thirst on; but of my blood thou shalt not drink."

Sometimes, when among the expectant crowd there happens to be (and this frequently happens) some young girls of rare beauty, the guards will refuse to be bribed by them, however much they may offer. They will insist upon being paid by the girls con-

* There are no people more honourably distinguished for humanity towards their relatives in distress than the French. At the present day, it is affecting to witness the crowds that congregate round the gates of the prisons and hospitals. Many of my readers, doubtless, have seen a drawing by the admirable M. Gavarni, of a crowd of women and children with baskets of provisions, waiting before the entrance to the cellars of the Tuilleries, in which the insurgents of June were confined.

senting to drink out of their glasses, *to eat cat's-meat* (not the *food*, but the *flesh* of cats), or, more abhorrent still, to give them a kiss. Such brutal alternatives are common to reigns of terror.

Will you go forth into the streets? Take, as a sample to the rest, the Rue St. Honoré; that long, narrow, dirty street,—where, fifty years hence, the English traveller in Paris will walk on a granite pavement, past splendid shops, by the stately arcades of the Rue de Rivoli, by the magnificent Palais Royal, by the Imperial Palace and Place du Carrousel; where he will go from his English hotel to his English tailor's, and from thence to his English reading rooms, and meet his English friends walking, and if he enters into French shops or converses with Frenchmen, see nothing but splendid wares and beautiful works of art, meet nothing but cordial politeness and genial welcomes. Let me see what the Rue St. Honoré is like in the winter of 1793. The street is crowded. Among the headdresses, red caps of liberty are very plentiful indeed, and diversifies the mass of heads like clusters of poppies. There are very few well-dressed people; and those who do wear a superior description of attire, wear it of the most extravagant colours and fashion. Some have long hair floating over their shoulders; some have it nearly shaved off their heads altogether, with only a small tonsure left at the top called a "Brutus." The hats are peaked or extravagantly flapped. The coats have preposterously small waists, and tails as preposterously long. There are dandies in pink-striped nankeen coats, in sky-blue, pea-green, scarlet and orange-tawny coats. "Motley is the only wear." These terrorist beaus wear top-boots, buckskin with bunches of ribbons at the knee, carry sticks, and staves of tremendous size, and bury their chins and swathe their necks in such thick folds of starched muslin, that you would think, in a desperate access of terror for their heads, they were determined to oppose as much material resistance to the descending axe as possible. Such are the citizens. What shall I say of the citizenesses! What can I say, except that they have adopted the antique, and abandoned modesty; that the Mother of the Gracchi appears in the likeness of Laïs or Aspasia, and that Calphurnia paces the streets as own sister to Messalina. In the

crowd, moreover, there are a vast number of citizens and citizenesses who are apparelled in the reigning fashion, though not in the classical one. *Theirs* is the *sans-culotte* fashion; the coquetry of blood *à-la-mode;* the "humour of forty fancies" pricked on rags and bare limbs with pikes and bayonets and naked daggers. Never has the female sex been so completely unsexed as during this Terror. It is bad enough to see women patriots and guillotined for patriotism, even though they go to the scaffold apostrophising liberty, like the citoyenne Roland; but it is worse to see women, as you see them now, carrying red flags; rushing along at the heads of bands of both sexes, mad with rage and hunger, beating drums, and yelling forth "*Du Pain! Du Pain!*" It is worse to see the "Tricoteuses" knitting in the gallery of the Jacobin Club; the "Fileuses" interpellating the orators in the Convention, and screaming forth demands of their own for "heads" against Marat and Collot d'Herbois. It is worse to see the famous, infamous Théroigne de Méricourt—the Belle Liègeoise—in a wild Amazonian costume, marching through the streets at the head of the Tricoteuses, the Fileuses, the Poissardes—the same Poissardes that rode the cannon back from Versailles and bore the head of the Garde du Corps, and cooked and eat Madame de Lambelle's heart. This wretched Théroigne de Méricourt—young, beautiful, ruined, brave, bloodthirsty, inexorable—is reserved for an awful doom. The mere mercy of the guillotine is denied her; a direr terror is in store. A few months hence, and the women she has excited, commanded, and goaded to bloodshed and torture, will turn upon her, horror-struck, brutalised as they are, at her unwomanliness. Upon the terrace of the Tuilleries, Théroigne de Méricourt will be publicly flogged. Abandoned, abhorred, despised, she will wander forth a beggar till she goes raving mad; and then years will succeed years, the Directory will supersede the Convention, the Consulate the Directory, the Empire the Consulate, the Restoration the Empire—and there will still be a white-headed, gibbering, crazy woman, crouching in a grated cell of the Bicêtre, ever seeking to repeat upon her miserable body her shameful punishment.

In these streets of terror, in front of each house there is affixed

a list of all the occupants thereof. This is for the information of the Commune, or of the countless spies and amateur executioners of Paris. This is to prove, also, the fervent Republicanism of the proprietor of the house. "No aristocracy here, citizens," he would seem to say, unconsciously paraphrasing Lord Shaftesbury; "Not an aristocratic dog to bark, or an aristocratic cat to mew, in the temple of Liberty." Yet the temple has frequently some secure penetralia — some garret, cockloft, cellar, cupboard, sliding panel, where aristocracy lies hidden upon straw, under a heap of rags, in a chest, or papered up in the thickness of a wall, for months. Ferocious, cowardly, avaricious as this Terror has made men's hearts, there shall yot be known instances of devotion as admirable, of fidelity as incorruptible, as in the days when Charles Edward lay in caves among the savage Mountaineers, and not one, not even he who was hard put to it to buy his prince a pennyworth of gingerbread, could be persuaded to play the traitor for thirty thousand pounds. Often, when night sets in, tables and chairs are brought from the houses into the streets, and men, women, and children sit down, with fear and trembling in their hearts, to Republican feasts. Republican toasts are given; and the *ci-devant* pledges the sweep, and drinks Liberty with white lips. Horse-slaughterers, from Montfauçon, fossoyeurs from Clamart, forts de la Halle, charbonniers and débardeurs (not the enticing nymphs in snowy shirts and black velvet pantaloons you will meet at the Bal de l'Opéra fifty years hence, kind reader, but ragged, ruffianly men, who pass their days knee-deep in the water of the Seine, unloading timber from rafts), sit with their arms round ladies' waists, and clap bankers on the shoulders. Anything to be Republican, anything to avoid suspicion; for suspicion is the shadow thrown by the posts of the guillotine, and those over whom that shadow floats shall be lifted from it nevermore.

The *saloons* of Paris are nearly all closed. That of the citizen Julien Talma, nearly the last which its hostess has had the courage to keep open, will be deserted in a few days. The guests are decimated by flight, by terror, by death. He that told an anecdote yesterday, is headless to-day; the son of the house is with Condé's army; every one has lost a son, a brother, a wife,

a child, and mutters "Whose turn next?" There is a guest who comes without a card and unannounced; whose voice is in the ticking of the clock, and the crackling of the embers, and the rustling of dresses; who comes clothed all in scarlet, and sits next to everybody's chair, who, though invisible, is manifest; whose name is Citizen Terror." Homage is done to this citizen by the slow disappearance of jewellery and plate down to the minutest article of value—the citizen does not like luxury while the army is without shoes: by an almost total silence, or at most by interbroken phrases, half-expressed opinions, half-checked questions—the citizen does not like discussion while the army fight without arguing: by a slavish tremour and a mutual distrust and suspicion—for the citizen brings other guests with him, who are modest and remain in the ante-chambers within ear-shot, always. These are spies, professional denouncers—like the "delatores" of the worst days of Rome. They are servants, postmen, milkmen, water-carriers. You may be denounced for complaining of the presence of pepper in your soup, for wearing a coat too long, for omitting to settle a milk-score. One person is denounced by her servant, for that she, the mistress, "*trouve mauvais que j'aille voir guillotiner et que je ne revienne pas avant le deuxieme*"—"that she finds fault that Abigail goes to see the guillotining, and that she does not come home before two o'clock." Whenever a guest falls under such an accusation as this, with that guest Citizen Terror walks home, arm in arm, at night. He takes him to his lodgings, so friendly is he, and sleeps with him; and walks about Paris the next day to show him the sights, calls in the Place de la Révolution, on M. Samson, by the way.

Every Parisian knows the cheerful little gossip that takes place at street corners early every morning when the lodgers and servants come tripping to the cart of the *laitière* and the temporary stall of the fruitière for provisions. The gossip in the winter of '93 chiefly refers to the number of domiciliary visits that have been made the night before, and the number of "*ci-devants*," or suspects, that have been arrested. The day has scarcely dawned, before the "queues" begin to form at the doors of the bakers' shops, and a famished, infuriated multitude begin to howl for bread, and blood, and liberty.

This is the Reign of Terror. The names of the principal streets are all altered, and are baptized now according to the Republican formula. The Poet Delille, himself a Republican, exclaims—

O mes concitoyens, dites-moi quel nom
Se nomment aujourd'hui ma ville et mon canton.

Trees of Liberty rear their bare, leafless trunks, decorated with faded ribbons, in every public place. Statues of kings and saints have been torn down, and for them are substituted figures of the Goddess Reason in plaster, or images of the Sovereign People in pasteboard. The flower-beds in the gardens of the Tuilleries have been rooted up, and potatoes have been planted in their stead, in a spirit of derisive utilitarianism. The Cathedral of Notre Dame has been desecrated by the blasphemous mummeries of the Reason worshippers. The carmagnole has usurped the place of the anthem, *and the holy water fonts have flowed with brandy*. There are no private, and scarcely any public, carriages in the streets. Where are they?—with the army. Where are the saddle-horses?—with the army. The contents of the granaries?—with the army. The bells of the churches, the lead from organ pipes, the roofs of houses, and the coffins of the dead?—with the army, converted into cannon and bullets. The young men?—with the army. The strength, and courage, and all that remains of public wealth in the nation, is with the army. For the Austrians are in France, the Prussians are in France, the English are in Toulon, the emigrants in La Vendée, only eighty leagues from Paris. *Here*, there is nothing left but Terror.

There is no gold in circulation at all, and very little silver, only the "gross sous" made from the church bells, and the assignats. It is treason against the Republic to refuse an assignat, and it is ruin to take one. Their value becomes enormously depreciated, and as much as *forty francs* (in assignats) has been given for a bottle of Cognac.

Shopkeepers and mechanics assume the sternest of Roman and Spartan names; and there are Marius-butchers, Spartacus-cobblers, Germanicus-tailors, Lycurgus-leather-sellers, and Brutus-

greengrocers. I think that the profound disgust which fifty years hence the middle classes of France will have for classical education—a disgust actively augmented by the Abbé Gaume in his famous "Ver Rongeur," in which he gravely advocates the entire expulsion of the language of antiquity from modern schools—may be traced to the forced classicism of 1793. We find it hard, here in England, to dissociate the waters of Helicon from schoolboy tears, and the poetic laurel from the castigatory birch, so closely are they mingled and interwoven; but to the French bourgeois Virgil is cousin-german to the Public Accuser; the Phrygian cap is the symbol of bloodshed and rapine; a Guillotine stands in the Forum; and the *Patres Conscripti* are only so many "Representatives of the People," at twenty-five francs a day, demanding the heads of citizens and each other.

Such is the Reign of Terror; or rather, to take my dazzled eyes from off the ensanguined page, and dismiss these gory shadows, such it *was*—and I thank God that I can at last speak of that horrible epoch in the past tense.

UNDER THE PILLARS.

SIMON Stylites lived at the top of a pillar; but the hermits of whom I am about to treat live under the Pillars, and round about them, and within their shadow, as you shall hear.

The Pillars are not ancient, although they are black and smoky and dingy enough to have belonged to the very darkest of ages. Nor are they, it must be imagined, at all picturesque, albeit they form an entrance to one of London's most ancient and most curious localities. The Pillars, indeed, give ingress to Shallow's Inn, one of the most renowned Inns of Chancery. Here it was that a relative of the Founder once sojourned; no other than Robert Shallow, Esquire, of Gloucestershire, and subsequently of Windsor, in the county of Berks, Justice of the Peace, and *coram* —"ay, Cousin Slender, and *cust-alorum*, ay, and *ratu-lorum*, too, and a gentleman born, master parson; who writes himself *armiquo* in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation—*armiquo*, and had done, any time these three hundred years." It must be remembered that Robert Shallow, Esquire, flourished so long ago as the reigns of Henry the Fourth and Fifth, and that all his ancestors had borne the dozen white luces in their coat, so that you may well form an idea of the antiquity of the Shallow family. I know not at what time it occurred to a Shallow to found an Inn of Chancery; but he must have done so many years before Robert his descendant came to live here, a student of the law. He was called "lusty Shallow" then, according to his Cousin Silence, and "mad Shallow," according to his own showing; and there, in Shallow's Inn was he, and little John Doit, of Staffordshire, and black George Dare, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele, a Colsole man—the four greatest swinge-bucklers of the Inns of court. This is the Shallow that fought with Sampson

Hockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn, the very same day that the famous Sir John Falstaff, when he was no higher than a crack-broke Skogan's head—a big man, Skogan—at the court gate. This is the Shallow who lay all night in the windmill in St. George's Fields, who often heard the chimes at midnight, who knew Jane Nightwork and all the *bona robas*, and whose watch-word with his comrades was "Hem! boys." This is the Shallow who mixed in the sports (when lying at Shallow's Inn) at Mile-End Green, and was Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show. I am afraid, though, that Shallow's Inn was not the only place wherein Master Shallow did lie; for by his friend Sir John's account he was not, in reality, half the famous fellow he made himself out to be. Indeed, he seems to have been less "lusty Shallow" and "mad-Shallow" the swinge-buckler, than "a man made after supper with a cheese-paring"—a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife—the very genius of famine, a man who might have been trussed, he and all his apparel, into an eel-skin; for the case of a hautboy would have been a mansion to him, at the time when John of Gaunt—"time-honoured Lancaster"—burst his head in the Tilt Yard for crouching among the marshal's men. And Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying—to say nothing of the middle-aged men, and the young, and the ladies.

At all events 'twas Shallow's fore-elder who founded the Inn under the pillars. "The Inn was so called," writes old How, "because it stands close to the church of St. Clara-under-Shallows, but nearer to the fair fountain called Shallow's well." How long before the reign of Edward IV. it had been occupied by students of the law—I paraphrase another learned authority, Mr. Howard Staunton—is not known; but we have Strype's testimony, to show that hereabout, and in the parts adjacent, were frequent disturbances by reason of unthrifts of the Inns of Chancery, who were so unruly that the inhabitants had to keep night-watches; and in the year 1582, the Recorder himself, with six more of the honest inhabitants, stood by the church of St. Clara-under-Shallows to see the lanthorn hung out, and to observe if he could meet with any more of these outrageous dealers. This was in the

time of Queen Bess; only imagine the Recorder of London coming down in the reign of Queen Victoria to see the lanthorn hung out, and peer scrutinisingly for the "outrageous dealers" of Shallow's Inn. It is odd, however, to mark that this same lanthorn is yet upon occasions hung out, especially on wintry Sunday afternoons, when a barricade is erected on the north side of St. Clara's churchyard, close to the pillars, to prevent the service in the church being disturbed, not by "outrageous dealers" but by passing cabs and omnibuses, and a lanthorn is attached to the barrier as a warning and pharos, lest rapid Hansoms should come to grief on the shoal of ropes and stakes.

Now, all this does not help the question as to who Shallow was; the original Founder who took his cast in his Inn. After all, does it much matter? who was Staple, who was Clifford, who was Thavies, who was Barnard, who Gray, who Lincoln, who Lyon—who all the rest of Inns of Court and Inns of Chancery founders? Erudite men—groping antiquarians—English Dryasdusts—may discover, or think they have discovered, and tell us; but does it matter, after we have been told, who was Bellamy, who Arthur, who Garraway, who Sontack, who all the Sams and Toms and Joes and Sallies and Jonathans that have given their names to taverns and coffee-houses any time these two centuries? Of course I could turn up chapter and verse, and give you all their biographies: but *cui bono?* They are dead and will eat no more bread, drink no more sack, and chalk up no more scores. Let us leave them in peace, and go back to the Pillars.

Under those Pillars have I stood, and lounged and wondered, and sheltered myself from the rain for many years; and knew and liked their darkling shadow long before I became a tenant of the Inn. It is an Inn of mystery; I met a friend once, under the Pillars, who asked me whither I was bound; I answered that I occupied chambers close by. "Whose name have you got on the door?" he asked. "Whose name! why my own, to be sure," I answered. "That's very imprudent," he remarked, shaking his head. "*No*body in Shallow's Inn, under fifty, has his real name up." But I am of opinion that my friend libelled the things under the Pillars."

There used, in my young days, to be a kind of daily fair held under the Pillars—a Fair minus, certainly, a dwarf, or a giant, or Richardson's show, or Algar's booth, or Wombwell's menagerie, or an armadillo, or a spotted girl, or a pig-faced lady, but still a Fair very diversified and very amusing, a pen, so to speak, of vagabond Bartlemy fair life, transplanted, bodily, out of Bartlemy. There is a little shop and house environed court-yard between the Pillars and the gates of Shallow's Inn proper. This court-yard, or *parvis* was at times not a bad representative of the Cour des Miracles, the purlieus of a minor racecourse, and the aforesaid pen of Bohemianism transplanted from Bartlemy. For here, until driven out by the stern beadles of the Inn, came the proprietors of peepshows, showing for a penny to adults, and for a half-penny—and in hard times even a farthing—to juveniles, strangely coloured panoramas of the Battle of Waterloo: the Duke of Wellington, Marshal Blucher, and the Emperor Napoleon Boneypartey being all depicted on thorough-bred chargers, and the spectator who had paid his money being entitled to take his choice as to which was Wellington, and which Blucher, and which the invisible Boneypartey. There are no peepshows worth looking at now-a-days. Do you know why? The boys have an abundance of gratuitous peeping through the lenses of the stereoscopes so obligingly exhibited in the windows of the opticians. Is it likely that they will care for vile daubs of the Battle of Waterloo displayed for money, when they can gaze for nothing at those wonderful realities that bring Switzerland and Venice, China and Egypt, palpable and distinctly before them?

To the peepshows there were added many a juggler with his cup and balls and goblets; many a quack in semi-Turkish costume selling anti-consumption lozenges, and infallible preparations for taking out grease spots. I wonder whether the dromedary ever came under the pillars to exhibit his hump to the wondering inhabitants. I wonder whether the dancing bear ever went through his melancholy movements on the stones of that little court-yard—stones that in summer time were as hot as must have been the iron plates on which the legends of my infancy recorded that bears were taught to dance. Monkeys in

plenty I have seen there; and there is one intelligent ape who still frequents the pillars—the old old monkey who fences with his proprietor, sweeps the tripod on which he is mounted with a little broom, fires off a mimic rifle, shakes hands, cracks nuts, takes off his cap and bows, makes faces, shows his teeth, and otherwise behaves like a rational being. Ahasuerus of monkeys! Wandering Jew with a prehensile tail! You see him everywhere. Now at Chester races, and now on Brighton cliff; now on Westmoreland falls, and now at Cowes, in the Isle of Wight. He seems as ubiquitous as the man who has sold and cried "brandy balls" for a time, the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. Where does he live, when he is at home, this venerable monkey? Where does he hail from? Came he originally from Barbary with the sanguinary Kirke and his "lambs?" or did Lord Heathfield bring him home from Gibraltar, that Parnassus of the simious race, after the siege? or was he a speculation of the observant publican Mr. Edward Ward, of "London Spy renown" returning, in the reign of Queen Anne from "ape and monkey climes?" It is my firm opinion that the accomplished ape is as old as the Chevalier de St. Germain pretended to be, and that he knows a great deal more about the history of civilization than Mr. Buckle, or than he, the monkey, cares to tell.

Organ-grinders come beneath the Pillars from time to time; so does that dilapidated man with lean legs disguised as a Scottish Highlander, and lamentably droning on a pair of wheezy bagpipes, while at his side there capers lugubriously, with an inexpressibly mournful, haggard, weazened, prematurely old little countenance, a diminutive girl, the daughter I presume of the sham Higlander, and accoutred, like him, in dingy bonnet and tartan kelt and half-stockinged legs. Ah! these mountebanks; and how I should rejoice in writing a folio volume abundantly illustrated by George Cruickshank, Leech, and Phiz, about them and their ways. Music has always had charms to soothe the breasts of the denizens of the court under the pillars,—the more so as those breasts have no appearance of being savage. Savage, indeed! There are four of the prettiest and most amiable young ladies (I never spoke to but one of them) that

can be found in London residing there at this moment. They come to the doors and windows, and listen—they and their infantile connections—with the greatest glee to the music. It likes me not, however. I have a horror of Ethiopian serenaders, and thew swarm under the Pillars. Confound them and their sooty faces, that look so frightfully grimy and greasy in hot weather. I shudder at those Welsh wigs dyed in ink that they wear in lieu of the negro's natural wool. I hold in abhorrence their battered white hats, their preposterous shirt collars and cravats, their abnormal eye-glasses, their banjos, their bones, and and their hideous chants. No, sirrahs, I have no wish to consort on a second-floor with Nancy, "in the Strand—the Strand,"—no, rogues, you shall not see me at the window. No, knaves, I am *not* bound to ride all night, or to ride all day, to bet all my money, or lose it, on any bob-tailed mares or grey horses, with a dooda, dooda, da. Oh! for an hour of despotism, that I might have all these precious Africans put under the pump, scrubbed clean, set in the stocks to dry, scourged, clad in hodden grey, and swiftly conveyed to a place of tribulation and repentance, where there are stones to break instead of bones to rattle, where there is oakum to pick instead of banjo-strings to strum. It appears to me in the highest degree scandalous and indecent that a Christian man with a white skin, and who can express himself with more or less grammatical correctness in the Anglo Saxon tongue, should willingly and of malice aforethought blacken his face and hands with "Day and Martin's sootpots," as Mr. Carlyle has it, assume a garb which seems to have been half raked out of the kennels of Philadelphia and the niggers' dram shops of the Five Points at New York, and half from the property-room of a theatre devoted to the offscourings of some bygone pantomime, and, armed with the musical instruments of pagan savages, repair to a place of public resort, and there, for hire and gain, howl forth by the hour together outrageous screeds of dissonant cacaphony, with words couched in a hideous jargon that Bosjesmen would be ashamed of, and baboons disdain to imitate. If there be one thing worse than the uncouthly grotesque ribaldry of these serenaders, it is their wretched simulation of pathos.

These fellows prance and yell in public thoroughfares, and are rewarded with coppers by the unthinking and the vulgar. But, bad as they are, they are not, by any means, the worst of their kind. There are niggers and niggers, serenaders and serenaders. There are other drolls—I use the term in its most offensive Gallic sense, *des drôles*—equally blacken and bedaub themselves; but are clad in garments of somewhat superior fashion and texture, who hire concert rooms, lecture halls, and theatres, even, that should be devoted to the performance of the regular drama; and, amid the applause of refined and aristocratic audiences, howl forth the ribaldry and whine out the same sham pathos that afterwards descends, to be thrice coarsened and thrice burlesqued, into the courts and alleys of London.

Good lackaday! what long paragraphs and tempestuous verbiage a fit of virtuous indignation brings one into. But it is not wholly futile. If not the *Sa'va indignatio*, it is at least honest and earnestly meant bile. They *are* a nuisance, these pretended negroes. They are a libel upon our civilisation. They *are* a reproach to education and to progress. Sham medievalism, sham classicism, may be borne; but it is intolerable to see men whose faces are white copy the manners and mimic the antics of filthy savages, or, worse, of debased helots. If there must be nigger melodies and nigger melodies, let them be confined to the barracoons of the slave coast, or the mud cabins of the King of Dahomey. They may amuse his Amazons; "Sally come up" may save some wretched Dahomean's head from coming off, and the dulcet strains of "Row, de Boatman, row," deter his sable and sanguinary majesty from holding any more "customary" festivals, with canoes that float in a lake of human gore.

And so, refreshed after a digression, as a Newfoundland dog after a cold bath, I come back immediately under the Pillars. Did I need any further refreshment I should find it here, for the Pillars have been, time out of mind, one of the most remarkable places in town for what I may call ambulatory refection. Here in the brave old days of yore, when "Brandyballs" was a beardless boy, and the intelligent ape a young monkey that had not yet seen the world, or taken lessons in fencing, you might have

seen the tossing pieman with his monotonous cry of "Here you are; toss or buy: up and win 'em." The boys were always up to toss, but, alas! they seldom won the pies. I fear that many small urchins, entrusted by their loving parents with small moneys for the purchase of household needments, have on their return home undergone some visitations of penny cane or halfpenny rods through having met that fatal pieman under the Pillars, and gambled away with him in the mad hope of obtaining impossible pies, that "change out" which they were instructed to bring so carefully home. The tossing pieman has disappeared from under the Pillars these many years; but I may remark, without a parenthesis, that an almost inconceivable amount of ill treatment is suffered by the children of the poor, from their not bringing home the proper amount of money from the sum which has been confided to them. Of course, in cases of wilful and dishonest malversation, a child deserves some corrective as a warning against further embezzlement, but they are just as frequently punished for inadvertently losing a portion of the "change out," or for having been cheated out of it by a fraudulent chandler's shopkeeper, or robbed of it by a rascally child-stripper and professor of the "kinchin lay," as for any guilty peculation on their own part. The children of the poor can scarcely toddle before they are sent out to purchase beer or victuals. They can scarcely talk intelligibly before they are sent to the pawnbrokers; and it is to my mind a cruel and a sinful thing to see a child of eight staggering under the weight of a baby, or two little atomies of girls toiling along with a big basket of linen between them.

Concerning the tossing pieman, I am *not* going to be virtuously indignant; for only last June, in this present year, I confess that, being in a merry mood, I tossed for nuts on Ascot Races—losing, I am glad to say, every toss, and imperilled, moreover, many halfpence into hopeless jeopardy at the enticing game of "Red, white, blue, feather and star." I always put a feather on red, and it always came up star; or else I put twopence on blue, and it came up feather. So, having a beam big enough for one of Penn's steam-engines in mine own eye, I will not inquire

too narrowly into the particulars which compose the mote my brother may have in *his* organ of vision.

Under the Pillars, at this present writing, I find departed—cease to admire and deal with—the man who sold the hot kidney puddings: he is alluded to by Charles Dickens, in the "Sketches by Boz" with reference to the curious compositions of his gravy, said to comprise equal parts of dirt, pepper, and hot water, and by poor Albert Smith, who touches upon him in connection with the Courier of St. Petersburg, who, in a flaming cartoon which became a transparency by night, and was gaily illuminated, was in the habit of riding six horses at once for one of the renal delicacies in question. Kidney puddings have apparently lost their popularity among out-of-door gastronomes: there is a fashion in street edibles, as well as in street games, street songs, and street slang cries. Nor does the hot potato man make his appearance under the Pillars, even in the severest winter weather so frequently as of yore. He comes, sometimes, it is true, to revisit the *cari lughi*, but it is in a furtive and despondent manner. Of old his can blazed in well-polished brass and scarlet paint. From his little steaming apparatus the vapour used to escape in rapid, panting, and woolly puffs. How he would expatiate over the size and farinaceous excellence of that "hog's food," as Cobbett called the homely, unpretending potato. "Like balls o' flour, sir," he was never tired of repeating to each customer. There was that peculiarity in his salt that it tasted like pepper, and of his pepper that it had a saline smack. Both have lost their savour. As for his butter, it was a fearful and wonderful compound which had never known Dorset, I fear—nay, nor Cork. He made it, I should imagine, from the milk of his own cow kept in a back yard somewhere in Locksfields, next door to a tallow-melter, and not far from a bone-boiler. It had a pleasant yellow look, however—a kind of nutritious dairyism; and I never see a railway porter cramming grease into the axle-box of a carriage without being reminded of the butter of the hot potato men. When he comes, now, under the Pillars, it is only to exchange moody complaints on the hardness of the times, and the degeneracy of the age with his still constant customers, the

cabmen from the stand which skirts the railway of St. Clara-under-Shallows. Where are the days, he asks, or the nights, rather, when young West-end swells or Templars, bent on diversion, would purchase half-a-crown's worth of hot tators—making him a present of the butter—with the sole purpose of pelting one another therewith in St. Clara's churchyard. Where are the City gents of graver gravity of life, who, returning eastward on cold January nights from the theatre, would purchase a couple of balls of flour, and walk with them, one in each hand, to keep them warm? And the cabmen keep him company in complaining. They sigh—no, they grunt rather—over those halcyon times ere Fitzroy dreamt of cab acts, when ninepence a mile was the minimum fare, when overcharge was not high treason, and abuse was looked upon as *levius plumâ*, *levius pulvere*, *levius ventres*, *levius muliere*, which is the highest thing, I take it, known.

The hot eel soup, too! gone. The whilks, in their bath of pickle and their staring saucers. The cholera of 1849 hit them a fatal blow, and the Pillarians have ever since shunned them as unwholesome. In their stead, I find the "Shallows" of peripatetic fishmongers, full in summer time of cheap lobsters, generally wanting one claw, and not unfrequently rendered heavier by water—not to say sand. In summer, as in winter, the oyster-man, with his blue apron, his knife stuck in the board before him, and his vinegar cruet consisting of a ginger beer bottle with a perforated cork through which the acetous fermentation filters, fails not. Long after the chief dealers, the Quins, the Scotts, and the Rules—have remembered the dictum once quoted in a grave trial *in banco* by John Lord Campbell, that oysters are only good in the months which have an "er" in them, the large-shelled molluscs are to be seen grinning and winking at the passers-by from their stall under the Pillars. They are so big, that they seem to have been grown in four-post beds, and fed with quartern loaves instead of crumbs; nothing of course to be compared, in respect to size, to the American oysters, one of which is a man's dinner, while two are his death; but still huge fishy flaps that can hardly be swallowed, and *will* be bitten. I wonder where

these out-of-season oysters come from, and who the people are who eat them.

It has always been my opinion that the decline in the demand for hot eel soup, kidney puddings, and baked potatoes, is due to the wholesale springing up of pie-shops, which establishments have lately taken to rosewood fittings, plate-glass and arabesque fittings; while the falling off in the fruit trade must be ascribed to the penny ice-shops. There is a gentleman with an Italian name, and an unmistakeably southern countenance, who has lately announced himself as a purveyor of Neapolitan ices in a little shop in St. Clara's churchyard, close to the Pillars. He has nearly ruined the old woman who keeps the apple-stall. The boys throng to them, and spoon the frigid compound down their throats with delicious joy. It does not in the least matter what his ices are made of. So long as they are sweet enough and cold enough, the basis might be old boots. He has moreover seriously injured the ginger-beer barrow trade, for he sells "imperial pop" —or the frothy delusion which still goes by that time and Tom Ingoldsby honoured name; himself likewise dispensing lemonade, which you may see cool and golden in a great foreign looking *carafe*—bottle does not at all convey the idea of its appearance—surmounted by a whole lemon by way of stopper. There is something honest and unsophisticated in this assurance, that the beverage is really made of lemons and not of citric acid. It is a modest plea of "no deception," very composing in these adulterating days, and reminds me of a place with an unpronounceable name on the Volga in Russia, famous for that epicure-beloved fish—ah! Apicius—ah! Lucullus—you never travelled towards Nishni Novgorod—called the *Sterlet*. When you have ordered your dinner, the waiter brings you the fish alive and kicking in a plate, as evidence that you are really about to partake of sterlet. At the Ship and Turtle, in Leadenhall Street, a practice the precise converse of this prevails; for it is *after* you have fed that a solemn waiter takes you to the cellarage, and shows you a variety of "toads with the kivers on," as I have heard turtle called by light-minded men; for the carapacious cutlet and soup giver should not be irreverently spoken of; and O! the deadly quarrels

I have witnessed between a croupier at a public dinner, and a gluttonous neighbour, through his imagining that he has been shabbily treated in the way of green fat. I think that in the distribution of turtle a rule that reigns at the dinner table of some lunatic asylums might be advantageously adopted. Every madman has a ration of half a pint of beer to his midday meal. The measures containing the beverage are all filled to the brim, and are set in groups, corresponding to the number of crazy people in each mess, in the very corner of the table. Each madman forthwith clutches the glass or can nearest him: he is satisfied, and there is peace and harmony; but very different would be the result if every man's half-pint were placed at his right or left hand. Lunatics are habitually jealous and suspicious; and each demented guest would think that his portion was smaller than his neighbour's—which erroneous impression would lead to squabbling and ill blood, and perchance to mutual howling, biting, and tearing.

I think I have by this time exhausted the aspects of life visible under the Pillars. If you have any curiosity to know anything about Shallow's Inn itself, and the people who dwell there, you may find and confer with me any day at my chambers, number three hundred and twenty-two, on the second floor. My name is not on the door; but that is no matter.

ROBSON.

Among other *desiderata* of this humorous age—Truth, for instance, Honesty, Faith, and boots that will wear for two months—there are few of which we stand in such immediate need—few that we so earnestly desire—few that would be of such use and benefit to this electro-plated society of ours—as Men. A Man now-a-days is decidedly a far rarer item in natural history than a black swan. He is so rare, so difficult to be met with, that there seems to be a danger of his becoming fabulous, like the phœnix, or extinct like the dodo, or unique like that celebrated specimen of the Saurian species, the "Oozly bird," one of which, and one only, came over, it is well known, in two ships. A friend of mine once told me that he had occasion to attempt the negotiation of a small loan of ready money from a substantial merchant in one of the wealthiest seaports in the north of England. He failed. "Sir," said the man he would have borrowed from, striking at the same time a weighty cash box with one hand, and jingling sovereigns in his trousers pocket with the other, by way of giving force to his asseveration, "*There is no money in Hull.*" And there was not, in the way he meant it, although he was a town councillor, and had ships on the seas, and a coach to ride in, and was worth fifty thousand pounds. I use an analogous chain of reasoning when I say we are short of men in these latter days, although the population of London exceeds two millions, and new swarms of parish brats are born every day. We have cliques, coteries, "sets," "parties," "schools," "staffs," "circles," more or less, "well informed"—but no men. Clubbism has been carried to its fullest extent—a miserable, peddling Joint-stock *Societé anonyme* system has pervaded every state and condition of life. It is intolerable. Give me a Man, even if he be a rogue. Let *Shylock* lend me

ducats, instead of the Imperial Bill Discounting Company (provisionally registered). Let Mr. Bludyer review this article and flay me, rather than I should be anonymously sneered at by the men on the "Mudlark" literary journal. Give me one Aretino to libel me, rather than a hundred "good-natured people" to tell lies about me! Who would not rather hear one Abelard lecture, than be told what the University of Stinkomalee "set" think of literature and art? Give me Sylla sooner than the thirty tyrants! Let me black the Emperor Soulouque's boots, and have him alone to kick me, in preference to being a waiter at the Cut-and-come-again Club, with six hundred masters, all with a fractional property in my services, and a fractional privilege of bullying me. I should like to be a Man myself; but I am alive to the humiliating truth that many tailors possess a larger share of individual humanity than I do. I am but one of so many "people," a member of certain "sets," a disciple of somebody's "school." I can't abuse my enemies, or love my friends, because they are or are not in "the same boat" with me. There would seem to be some little chance for a man to assert his manhood in this little "Train Band" of ours. We are a Republic, and do not hide our heads and hand-cunning under the anonymous and irresponsible "We;" but were we fourscore times Men, every single one of us, the public would not believe in our individuality. The Public (I hate that noun of quantity, signifying many fools) will persist in setting us down as so many "clever young men." I would much sooner write the poem of "The Lump of Dirt," than be thought clever. There is an idiot, I believe, who considers us to be a "fast set;" and I shudder for the time when the reviewer of some sporting newspaper will speak of us as "Groombridge's lot." Even Mr. Groombridge is not a Man. He is but a fraction of a firm, and one of the fathers of the "Row." There is too much of this: of Joint Stock Companies, cliques, sets, clubs, and corporations, with neither souls to be saved, nor bodies to be kicked. I would rather be alone, and as bare as a robin, than a tenth-part proprietor of Mr. Moses's wardrobe. Oh! for a tub, and to be Diogenes—yet that would serve my turn but little, for there are five hundred Diogenes now in London; they are as numerous as

letter-writing Madame de Sevignes in Paris, or Prince Galitzins in Russia.

Very rarely, once in a way, wandering through this chattering, stereotyped, back-scratching, "caw me caw thee" *camaraderie* (we have no English equivalent for the term, or I would scorn the French) of a desert, we come upon a Man—a thing with a heart, and a hand, and feet, and brains—a man who can think, and talk, and act for himself—can go to the Deuce, if need be, for himself, without going to perdition because it is the fashion, or because the "Cut-and-come-again Club" go there too. I take true Thomas Carlyle to be a man; but I honestly declare that I know no other living writer who is entirely and independently manly. They have all, the great masters even, some skeleton conventionalities in their house, some reticence of honest assertion; they kiss their thumbs instead of the Book, and tell the truth, but half the truth, or something else besides the truth. I think that German poet, Heine—paralysed, bedridden, living corpse as he is—to be a Man, and a great one. I don't think it would be a bull to assert my belief that Miss Nightingale is a Man—every inch of her. Mr. Ruskin is a Man—but unfortunately he is a madman into the bargain. Mr. John Everett Millais has much that is genuinely manly in his composition. He only wants a few more summers to pass over his head, he only wants the nonsense knocked out of him by a wholesome course of sound, honest, unsparing abuse, and he will be a Man of Men.

Trust me, manhood is a most profitable investment. It is a capital thing to "go in" for; though, to be sure, many of us do set up for men, and are incontinently detected in grinning, nut-cracking, and hanging on to tree-boughs by our tails, like homely apes as we are. But the world will recognise a man when the genuine article is manifest. We tolerate, we obey, we laud, we crouch and quail before one of the most finished and disreputable scoundrels that this world perhaps has ever seen—that slowly cruel, torpidly ruthless, lethargically, logically abandoned Incarnation of Will—he who has understood the transmutation of metals so well as to change a golden sceptre into a rod of iron wherewith to rule forty millions of people: we cringe under his

rod like hounds, and hail him Imperator, not for his name sake, he is a scandal to it—not because he is Porphyrogenitus, he is but heir to a kingdom of shreds and patches, and his very birth is doubtful—not for his antecedents, they are infamous—not for our confidence in his intentions, he is perjured—but for his manhood. He is a Man. He can say "Yo el Rey." He speaks his own speeches, and prescribes, and cheats, and tyrannises not vicariously, but of himself. He is a sublime egotist and a great Man.

From the great king Agamemnon to a poor play actor: from one who writes himself Basileus by the "Grace of God, and the national will" (and his own), to MR. ROBSON, of the Royal Olympic Theatre, Wych Street, London, seems at first a transition as violent as from the sublime to the ridiculous—Lombard Street to a china orange—Heliogabalus to Jack the painter—Aaron with his rod to Professor Anderson with his inexhaustible bottle. But on nearer examination I think it will be found that the player deserves as distinctive a place on the roll of Men as the emperor. I claim, and believe, and assert ROBSON to be a MAN—in his Art I man,—in private life (and I take this opportunity of mentioning that I have not the slightest personal acquaintance with him, and, to my knowledge, never met him with the paint off his face in my life) he is but one of so many stereotyped millions of tax-payers and readers of *The Times* newspaper. As an artist I recognise in him will, power, individuality, independence, originality, thought. He stands out alone; he has in his vocation no peers: no man's mantle—Bannister's, Dowton's, Shuter's, Emery's—has fallen upon him; but he has made a cloak for himself out of the rags and tatters of the lamentable dramatic cast-off clothes shop, and wears and keeps it right royally. *Guai a chi la tocca.* He transmits to us neither the traditions of Betterton, nor of Garrick, nor of anybody; but he will transmit to our own grandchildren the traditions of Robson. In a state of the drama utterly degraded and contemptible, (but not moribund: the drama is as deathless as the human passions it *should* pourtray,) he has made a name—a position. He has influence: he is an Institution. He is a Man, and so, adhering to the principle of speaking of a man as we find him, I, having found him,

will now speak of him. So come along, Mr. Robson, and be criticised.

We "go to see Robson," and that is perhaps one of the strongest evidences of his individuality. It can be said of scarcely any other actor of the present day. We don't go to see Mr. Benjamin Webster specially; but we drop in at half-price at the Adelphi Theatre: we remember the next day that in a particular piece we saw Mr. Webster act like the careful, painstaking, observant, conscientious, appreciative comedian as he is. We go to the Haymarket, and are amused by Compton's dryness and Buckstone's drollery; but to see them personally was not the only object of our visit. We went to see some farce by John Oxenford or Robert Brough, in which Buckstone and Compton were supposed to be very funny. People don't go to see Wright, at least I don't, seeing that I would prefer walking ten miles to avoid Mr. Wright altogether. I don't think that I am singular either in saying that I would rather witness the "Game of Speculation" (though the play is, indeed, but a bald translation of the inimitable "Mercadet") without Charles Mathews, than Charles Mathews without the "Game of Speculation." Mr. Alfred Wigan, again, is an accomplished actor, an excellent mimic, an always amusing foot-light companion; Mr. Emery is characteristic, picturesque, and always sensible; yet I would as soon go to Jericho as to Wych Street if Emery and Wigan were the only attractions of that unsavory thoroughfare. There are men who tell you that they pay their guinea for an opera-stall specially to see Cerito. Don't believe them. Twenty shillings out of the score and one are paid for the half-hundred pair of legs in pink fleshings. I am sure no man in his senses would make a special pilgrimage to Oxford Street specially to see that vain little man, hard by the American Stores, who mistakes a plenitude of upholstery for archæological lore, an abundance of "supers" for a restitution of the text of Shakspeare, and fancies himself an actor because his father was famous. I did go to see "King Henry the Eighth," the other night, but I am not exaggerating when I state that I left the theatre in a state of foggy uncertainty as to the identity of the actor who has misrendered *Wolsey;* and

to this hour I cannot make up my mind as to whether it was *Cardinal Campeius*, who was the diminutive thing with the hatchet face, or *Lord Sands*, who spoke as though he had a cold in his head.

But we go to see Robson. He is the attraction of the Olympic Theatre; to see him we brave the perils of Wych Street, and the carriages of the polite world set down with their horses' heads towards Temple Bar, and block up Drury Lane. "Seeing Robson" was one of the few London attractions that the editor of *The Times* (a clear-sighted man, though a dishonest one) could enumerate among the notable sights fit to be offered to the foreign visitor to London. It is as imperative to see Robson, as to see St. Paul's, or the Falls of Niagara, or the "Elephant." I verily believe that if the Olympic were a barn, and Wych Street a sewer (it is not much better); if the stage were merely so many boards on tressels; if there were no better scenes than placards with "This is a chamber," "This is a forest," inscribed on them; if the audience had to stand up during the performance, and there were no better orchsetra than a blind fiddler, or a boy with the bones; if Mr. Robson played *Richcraft* in the uniform of a captain in the guards—as Garrick played *Macbeth*—or in a waterproof siphonia, or in a sack, or (saving your presence) in a full suit of buff, the people would still crowd to see him, would still, from the highest to the lowest, throw up their caps, and cry "Io Robson! Evöe Robson!"

Why? The reason I think is simple and palpable. Why? Because to this man has been given an insight into the human heart, and the power of delineating human passions. He does not create—at least he ought not to attempt creation, for his efforts of unmitigated originality are simply midsummer madness; full of genius, but incoherent and oppressive as a night-mare—but it is his to seize, to demonstrate, to drag up from the depths of the soul the latent, seldom seen, more seldom understood, emotions that make up the sum of humanity. He is a *voyant*. He is the *Bodach Glas* of human character. All the petty meannesses, the crawling spites, the grovelling desires, the pettish caprices; all the spasms of malice, of envy, and of hatred; all

the insolence, the sarcasm, the anger, the impotent malevolence, the one's own heart-eating, the cunning, the hypocrisy, the transitions of misery and happiness, of supplication and refusal, of elation and depression, of sullenness and frenzy, of determination and irresolution; all the howls of a wild beast pent up in a man's body; all the little vestiges of human feeling sometimes evoked from the breast of a seeming tiger, lights and shades, sunshine and clouds, smiles and tears, the evil and the good, the rascally and the sublime, Robson is master of them all. When he acts, you see a Man before you often contemptible, often detestable, but always natural. But it is not a man in evening dress, with his hand on his heart, and "My dear fellow" on his rotten lips. Robson has many rivals in mere "character" parts: Wigan, Charles Mathews, Webster, Leigh Murray, are better mimes than he. Emery surpasses him in the art of dressing and playing a man with a wooden leg, or a man with a bald head, or a man in a passion, or in liquor. I don't think he would excel as a stage Irishman, or a stage Frenchman, or a stage Yorkshireman—though he would play all wonderfully. But he shows us the *man turned inside out.* He wears his soul on his sleeve. He shows us the inner life. He shows us not only Prometheus, but Prometheus's vulture-torn liver. He lets us behind the scenes of his heart. His words are not cloaks to conceal his thoughts: you divine the innermost thought, and the man's heart of hearts by his talk, in a gasp, a half-uttered ejaculation, a smothered curse, a scream. His speech is translucent. The Man grand, paltry, noble, despicable, loveable, hateful, stands out before you, naked as a confession by Jean Jacques.

All this is done without ostentation, without effort, without apparent exertion of the means of art. The end comes before you suddenly, unexpectedly. He is not a Paganini fiddling on one string; you do not marvel because he can play the *Carnival de Venise* on a small-tooth comb, he rather reminds me of an Æolian harp played upon by the wind at its wild will. His physical qualifications are few. He is an agile dancer; he has a wonderful command of voice in pitch and intonation, and is a passable mimic; but his stature is small, his presence mean, his

gait exaggerated, his face not in any way remarkable for expression. In *Falstaff's* ragged regiment he might have been counted as any other younger son of a younger brother, as "food for powder," and "good enough to fill a pit." In the street I have heard he looks like any other ordinary little man; in society he is modest and unassuming. Sitting opposite to him in the Olympic dress circle you might, were you ignorant of his antecedents, mistake him for a gentleman "engaged for general utility," or for the performance of the unpretending part known in theatrical *argot* of "*Charles his friend.*" Suddenly you find yourself listening to a man possessed by a devil; you are riding through the air on a broomstick to a witch's Sabbath; a wild horse is running away with you; you are plunged into a lake of burning marl; you have laughing gas applied to your nostrils; you are in hysterics; you go mad; and it is only after all "little Robson" playing an absurd part in a sorry burlesque by Mr. James Robinson Planché, "Rougecroix Pursuivant at Arms."

This may be turgid fustian, and not criticism, but it is true. Go and see Robson in the "Discreet Princesses." In his antics and his caperings, his bellowings and chucklings, his monstrous gesticulations, his abrupt transitions of voice, his outrageous caricatures of vehemence, his simple buffoonery and "mugging"—in the midst of your convulsions of laughter at his most excellent fooling—there will suddenly come upon you a feeling sharp and thrilling as a galvanic shock, and very nearly akin to terror. There is method in the man's madness. All these uncouth gibes and mouthings, these nods and becks, *mean something:* you roar with laughter at a superlatively ridiculous ejaculation of "Mmps;" you suddenly find yourself shuddering. Is the man laughing at you, and himself, and all the world? Is he showing you a parti-coloured soul as well as a parti-coloured body? Is this mountebank-seeming actor, in fine, incarnating for you, for a Christmas night's amusement, the *sæva indignatio* of Swift, the *froide raillerie* of Voltaire, the sardonic merriment of Rabelais, overlaying bitter truths in gross buffoonery, dressing his satire in "*gros sel*," as Harmodius dressed his steel in myrtle? Little children read "Gulliver;" they reck nothing of the mad rage

that tore Jonathan Swift's vitals while he read it, and what burning sneers lurk like adders in those seeming good-natured lies. Little children see Robson dance the Lancashire clog dance in the "Yellow Dwarf," and caricature Charles Kean's shins in the ghost scene in the "Three Princesses," but who shall say—Bah! am I to go to Wych Street for symbolism? When Mr. Ruskin wrote "Modern Painters," it is said that Turner, glancing over the book, expressed his opinion that the writer was an Ass, and pretended to know a great deal more of his (Turner's) meaning in his pictures than he did himself. Why can't I take Mr. Robson for granted? He may be, after all, but an eccentric actor making use of the best means at his disposal for amusing a holiday audience; but of a surety he frightens me sometimes.

The first time I ever saw Robson was, I believe, under the management of Mr. Farren, in the character of *Shylock*, in a travestie of the "Merchant of Venice." He had played, I think, in a similar travestie of "Macbeth," previously. I have seen and admired him since then in almost every character he has attempted, from *Jem Baggs*, in the "Wandering Minstrel," to the "Blighted Being." It is my conviction that his last impersonation—that of *Prince Richcraft* in the "Discreet Princesses"—is as immeasurably the best I have yet seen him in, as the piece itself is unmistakably the worst I ever witnessed. In deformity, Robson is always at home; but in the *Yellow Dwarf* he was cramped and fettered by the supernatural nature of the part. He had merely to play a malevolent sprite—a mischievous little gnome—and he played it admirably; but it is in the man fiend that he excels: moral deformity is his forte. "Deformed persons," we read in THE *Essays*, "are commonly even with nature; for as nature hath done ill by them, so do they by nature, being for the most part (as the Scripture saith) 'void of natural affection:' and so they have their revenge of nature." Thus writes the "greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind." I do not suppose Mr. Robson to be a student of Bacon (I only quote him myself, because I came upon the passage accidentally in an odd volume I purchased for fourpence at a bookstall, and thought the words apposite); but he has assuredly, though perhaps unconsciously,

justified the philosopher's remarks. In *Richcraft* you see the unceasing longing to be "revenged on nature" for her ill-treatment; the life-long rage at his deformity, the fierce resolve to have change for the hump out of somebody—the abilities and energies perverted, to be able to retaliate on the world; the boldness of the wretch exposed to scorn; the industry in watching the weaknesses of others that he may have something to repay. The deformity pervades you everywhere, without its being insisted on. It is scarcely apparent in his dress; but the heart is hunched, the soul squints, the mind is bow-legged, the feelings are wall-eyed, the passions high-shouldered.

There are some persons who aver and maintain that Robson is properly a tragedian; and that, because he is passionate, because he can be pathetic, he could sustain any one of the characters in the Shakspearian repertory. Such persons do not know what they are talking about. In the tragedian we expect (and I think need) artifice as well as art. The tragedian must be, to a certain extent, conventional, unreal, like his language Men do not speak in blank verse, or in continual metaphor. In real life we want the "Mmps!" A man will scratch his head at a funeral, but it could not be tolerated if he were to do it in *Brutus*. A tragedian ought not to blow his nose even. *Hamlet* taking snuff would be preposterous; but I think Mr. Robson would and must do all these things, and more, in a purely tragic character, or he would be painfully dull and lifeless. In the tragedian we expect and require the noble presence, the sonorous voice, the dignified gesture, the measured accent, the flowing robe. *King Lear* must go mad like a gentleman. *Brutus* must fall on his sword in a dignified manner; Robson would make him skulk into a washhouse, and cut his weasand with a penknife. Robson, like Rembrandt, like Hogarth, shows you the realities of passion, of this poor, frail, ludicrous human nature, with its miserable necessities, its ignoble thoughts, its paltry desires. Rafaelle paints you an altar-piece, a Jacob's vision, or a Woman taken in adultery, calm, grand, tranquil, sweet; but Rembrandt or Hogarth give you a cow-boy sprawling in a sodden sleep, or a Dutch wanton blubbering between two old clothesmen. *They make their cha-*

racters take snuff, and scratch their heads, but how grand and terrible they are! How tragic they can be without being tragedians!

I think Robson could play *Shylock* (the real one), and I am sure he would give us a splendid notion of *Hamlet*. For I, for one at least, want a thoroughly new reading of this little-understood character. My private opinion of the Prince of Denmark is, that he was a great deal more mad than people imagined (if you were to know how mad *I* was there would be a commission *de lunatico* to-morrow); that he was devoured by the spleen; that he had behaved very badly to *Ophelia;* that he used to "mug" himself with cold gin and water; that he had the profoundest contempt for *Horatio;* that he was immensely vain, rather good-looking, and *that he had a club-foot.* I want Mr. Robson to show us such a *Hamlet the Dane* as this—hypochondriacal, capricious, pettish, misanthropic, soured, disappointed, tyrannical, selfish, depraved, yet with some noble aspirations, some godlike qualities. There was such a Prince of Denmark who died at Missolonghi thirty years ago.

So, with the strongest advice to Mr. Robson to undertake the study of *Hamlet*, I must lay down my pen and leave him. Little more advice I have to give him. I cannot recommend him to addict himself to book learning; it would not do him any good, I opine, and has brought some people to a pretty pass. Even poor Charles Kean might have made a tolerable *Rosencrantz* by this time if he had not taken to reading Stowe. I cannot advise Robson to study his fellow-actors—he is immeasurably above them all. But let him continue his studies nevertheless. In courts and alleys, in hospitals, madhouses, and gaols, in law courts, and pawnshops, and chapels of ease, in taprooms, parlours, and Belgravian drawing-rooms, he will find a never-failing store of things human to observe and study. Let him continue reading the Book of Human Life. On the stage, as it is, I know no man who has read it so fully and so well.

THE LAST CRUSADER.

RAFAELLE, the Angel-limner; Guido with his heavenward turned visages; the ghost—stalwart, grim, awful—of Michael Angelo Buonarotti, pointing with a giant hand* from the midst of the gemmed raiment and rich carnations of Sebastiano del Piombo; with these the grand old white-bearded man Tiziano Vecelli, so affectionately called by his countrymen *the* Titian, with hues as gorgeous as his own Venice. Such are my glorious company in one of the shabby suite of shabby rooms near Charing Cross, called (in a spirit of polite irony, I presume,) the National Gallery. Shabby, paltry, in bad taste, miserably inefficient as these rooms may be for the purposes they were intended to fulfil, while I have these great masters of Art around me I can forgive and forget the ugly hive that holds so many sweets: the barn-like frontage, the mustard-pot dome, and pepper-box cupolas. I am not alone. The Grenadier Barracks may be close behind me, with most unromantic fifing and drumming in the yard thereof, for ever calling discordant echoes from the purlieus of Leicester Square; with inartistical-looking privates lolling out of monotonous windows, with doors, jamb-studded by lance corporals returning from the fatigue duty of carrying home their better halves' baskets of newly mangled linen. The neighbouring sky may be obscured by puffy steam issuing from the work-a-day baths and wash-houses. There may be little charity children, hard by, droning forth spelling-lessons in St. Martin's Schools.

* It is a matter of artistical tradition that the figures in Sebastiano del Piombo's great picture of the Raising of Lazarus were *drawn* by Michael Angelo, who wished to pit the Venetian painter against Rafaelle, and, knowing the proficiency of Sebastiano as a colourist and his weakness as a draughtsman, designed his picture for him.

Sallow paupers may be uncomfortably stone-breaking, oakum-picking, bone-crushing, handmill-grinding, all in direct opposition to good taste and the advancement of the Fine Arts, in the inner yards of St. Martin's workhouse; but I can condone all their common-place delinquencies, and all the short-comings of the locality, the *entourage*, the population, Cockspur Street with its hideous statue, St. Martin's Lane, the ginger-beer fountains, the post they have stuck Nelson on. *Here*, in the one pair front of the National Gallery, I can walk with the peacocks in the rainbow-marbled palace of Dido; good master Steenwyck my gentleman usher. I can bide under the trees with Pater Æneas in the storm. I can tremble when Lazarus rises, and weep when the Angel lifts His auburn tresses in pious Francia's canvas. I can fondle the little lamb that Saint John is leading in the desert, can wipe the moisture from the swimming eyes of the Gevartius of Vandyck, can count the furrows in the forty per cent. face of Rembrandt's Jewish Rabbi.

But not for these is my admiration, sir, to-day. My frying-pan (to be vulgar) is for other fish. I am spell-bound by the canvasses of another painter, newly gone to his reward—taken too soon (though his years had come to those that can be counted but as labour and sorrow) from us and Art—whose birth and death were both of modern date; but who is surely as old a master as any of the Sampsons of the brush—as any strong Gyas or strong Cloanthus of the easel and maulstick here present. Proximate to where Claude Loraine is toying with the Queen of Sheba, stands Joseph William Mallard Turner a-building of Carthage with bricks of gold and silver and jewels. And *that* builder against the Frenchman for any stake you like to mention!

Few of us there be but have laughed, long and loudly, at the monstrous splodges of colour the marvellous man sent of late years to the Royal Academy exhibitions, and bade us, authoratively, reverence as pictures. What jokes we made! what humorous censures we passed upon those eccentric performances! *Now* that the Master is dead, the evil that he did lies buried with him. For all his faults, and eccentricities, and mad-

nesses, (if you will) we will proudly and lovingly remember our Englishman as the greatest landscape-painter the world ever saw. Such, at least, be *my* remembrance of Joseph Turner, the barber's son, who was the Milton of his art—who painted the "Shipwreck" and the "Building of Carthage,"—who sleeps the great sound sleep now in the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul, but who lives and holds his own against all comers among the greatest of the ancient masters in our Gallery.

And, filling mine eyes with the building of Carthage, the nascent palaces, and growing terraces, and embryo fountains, I turn, in thought, from Carthage built to Carthage ruined. Musing upon the delended city, slowly, sadly rise before me the shadows of its greatness—visions of its magnificence, its decadence, its various fortunes and woes, its headlong fall, its utter erasure and blotting out from the roll of cities.

Stand, Pilgrim, on the summit of Byrsa, and gaze upon the ruins of Carthage, for it hath its ruins yet: yea, to this day, in spite of railroads and submarine telegraphs and tourists from Peckham Rye poking about the Levant in the steam-boats of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. The ruins of Carthage resembling those of Sparta: meagre in data, too shattered to confirm, too dilapidated to elucidate, they yet cover a considerable space. Gaze, Pilgrim (shading thine eyes from the hot African sun, though the year is no yet older than its second month), fig-trees and olive-trees spread forth their earliest leaves; the haughty angelica, the scrolled acanthus, form tufts of verdure scattered among starred and shapeless masses—rocks almost—of feverish marble, that once were temples, palaces, columns, amphitheatres. Far away in the distance gaze upon the Isthmus, upon the double sea, upon the hazy islands, upon smiling plains, blue lakes and delicately rose-and-purpled mountains, upon fields, forests, ships, aqueducts, Moorish villages, Moslem hermitages, minarets, and the white houses of Tunis the whilom piratical. Silent as are these hot plains (for the sun is high in the heaven, and few Tunisians care to stir abroad in the day-heat), legions of shadows of the men and women who have lived their course of life in Carthage flit solemnly across the landscape: Dido Sophronisba,

and the noble spouse of Asdrubal; Hannibal and Marius; the Roman revenge, and the Carthaginian women weaving their hair into bow-strings. These broad Afric lands stand no need of sowing with dragons' teeth for an army of recollections to start up armed and appointed. Come the mailed men—the serried legions that fought at Scipio's bidding. Comes the shadow of Utica and of Cato's house. Alas! that it should be but a shadow. Caprœa yet can show the ruins of the palace of Tiberius; but of Cato's dwelling there remains nor stock, nor stone, nor vestige. Come the days of the barbarians—come rapine and slaughter, and ruined houses and choked-up fountains—come the Vandals, the terrible Vandals; and, no less terrible though more polished, Belisarius and his Byzantine hordes. Come the cruel Moors with their Sultan, and where his horse's hoof has touched the earth there grows no more grass. Lastly comes, Pilgrim, ravening for Saracen blood, hot upon their track, Louis of France, called the Saint, the LAST CRUSADER. An you would know how it sped with him in his last crusade, and how the Angel of Death struck him amid the ruins of Carthage, you shall hear in this my reverie.

In God's year 1269, Louis the Twelfth of France is no longer young. Cares of state and private sorrows, fierce wars and piou vigils, have combined, too, with years to enfeeble his health and bow his erst stalwart frame. He cannot sit his charger for any length of time. His two-handed sword and massive triangular shield are burdens to him. His casque weighs heavily on his brow. Wearisome are the strong shirt of mail, the massive greaves, and cuissons, and jamb-plates. Saint Louis grows old and weak. But his soul is strong, and yearns as vigorously as ever (piety prompting) for the redemption of the Holy Land from the miscreant Paynims. His will is, now, in the November of his life, to go beyond sea once more, and do battle for the Cross. The great ones of the kingdom, haughty holders of ducal fiefs, mailed barons and belted knights, are summoned to Paris, and the King paints to them, in colours as vivid as he may, of the Christian woes in Palestine—of the perils of the Sepulchre and of the Holy Places. And not only of the dolours of Palestine,

but of the Christians of that Egypt and of that Alexandria of which St. Cyril once was pastor—of that Africa in whose burning deserts good Saint Jerome awed the savage lions with the Word. And he declares his fixed resolution to go, armed, to succour his afflicted brethren in the East, and to slaughter (parenthetically) those other brethren of his who wear turbans and scimitars. They are to be remorselessly extirpated—for the greater glory of Heaven. So saying, he takes the cross from the hands of the Pope's legate, and gives it to his two sons.

The ducal fioffers, mailed barons, and belted knights take the cross also in great numbers, directly their lord the King has set the example. Piety becomes fashionable. Takes the cross a brother-king and king-brother of Louis, to wit, Charles of Sicily. Takes it furthermore Edward Longshanks, Prince Royal of England, with as little scruple as he will take Wales and Scotland some of these days. Takes it Gaston of Bearn, and the Kings of Navarre and Aragon. The fair dames of Europe, undaunted by the grim reports of Paynim fevers and Paynim swords, prepare to follow their lords. The lady of Poitiers, the Countess of Brittany, Jolande of Burgundy, Jeanne of Toulouse, Isabella of France, Amicia de Courtenay; youth and beauty of blood-royal —these quit the distaff—which queens are not too proud to handle in 1269—and follow their husbands beyond the salt sea. Their white hands are not satisfied with buckling on the armour, or lacing the morions, or knotting the scarves of their true knights. The taper fingers long to be unbuckling the armour-straps after victory—albeit, perchance, there shall be other work found, ere long, for the pretty digits: unguents and bandages to be prepared for the wounded; orisons to be said, with clasped hands, for the souls of the dying.

Saint Louis makes his will. To Agnes, his youngest daughter, he leaves ten thousand francs as her wedding portion. To his Queen Margaret, he leaves four thousand francs. Then he appoints two Regents to rule over the kingdom during his absence: Mathew, Abbot of St. Denis, and Simon, Sire of Nesle. After which he will go take the oriflamme.

Now, the oriflamme, as you should know, is a standard of silk,

attached to the end of a lance. Now its colours are "Samite vermillion, cut to the guise of a pennon, with three peaks, and having round it hoops of green silk." In times of peace, over the high altar in the abbey of Saint Denis, sheltering the tombs of the Kings of France; in times of war it is borne before them in the front of the battle, where the King's place should be. From the hands of Abbot Mathew Louis receives the sacred standard. At the same time they gird his loins with the *escarcelle* (a girdle), and put into his hand the *bourdon* (a stick), which are called the consolation and sign of journey. And the delivery of these is so ancient in the Frankish monarchy, that it is patent that Charlemagne sits on his throne in his tomb beneath the dome of Aix-la-Chapelle, girt with the golden girdle, and armed with the jewelled staff he was wont to carry in Italy.

The morrow, after praying at the tombs of the martyrs, and placing his kingdom beneath the protection of the patron of France, he proceeds in great state and ceremony, but with bare-feet (as also his two sons), from the Palais de Justice to the church of Notre Dame. The evening of the same day he leaves for Vincennes, where he bids adieu to his Queen Margaret, "gentle, good queen, full of great simplicity," says Robert of Sainceriaux; afterwards he quits for ever the old oaks of the forest of Vincennes, the venerable witnesses of his justice and of his virtue.

"Many and many a time," writes the good Sire de Joinville, have I seen the holy king-man (*saint homme roy*) sitting at the foot of an oak in the wood of Vincennes, and making us all sit down over against him on the green grass; and all who had matters concerning which they desired speech with him, were suffered to address him without any serjeant or usher offering them hindrance. Many times, so, in the time that is gone, have I seen the good king come to his garden that is in Paris, vestured in a coat of camlet, a surcoat of tiretaine without sleeves, a mantle above of black sandalette; and there have his carpet spread for us and for him to sit round about among the flowers, and there did despatch for his people, both high and low, as he did in the bygone at Vincennes."

There is a gloomy, gothic, silent, fever-stricken seaport down in the dusky South of France, called Aigues-mortes; and from here, on the 1st of July in God's year 1270, Saint Louis sets sail—he and his warriors, on his last crusade. Three schemes had been mooted in the King's councils: to disembark at Saint Jean-d'Acre; to attack Egypt; or to make a descent on Tunis; there being Paynims to be slaughtered, and Christian laurels to be won, at each of these three points. Unhappily, Saint Louis takes the last of the three courses, for a reason you are to hear.

Tunis is now governed by a prince whom Geoffry of Boileau and William of Nangis call Omar-el-Muley-Moztanca. The historians of the period do not state why this prince should have feigned a desire to embrace the Christian creed: but it is probable enough that having heard of the strong crusading armaments preparing in the ports of the Mediterranean, he thought it worth while to send ambassadors to the court of King Louis, flattering the holy king with hopes of an exemplary conversion, on his (Muley's) part illusive and improbable. This he has done on the King of France first taking up the cross—not knowing probably where the storm would fall. His deceit brings the storm right upon his own head; for King Louis, being in doubt as to the sincerity or hypocrisy of this Mussulman neophyte, resolves to unriddle the pious enigma with a solution of glaives and hauberks, and steers direct for Tunis to convert Muley, *bon gré* if he can, *mal gré* if he cannot.

Perhaps a little political reason lurking beneath this pious resolve: The Tunisians have infested the seas for years; their rovers intercept the succours that are sent to the Christian princes in Palestine; they furnish neighing steeds, bright weapons, and strong soldiers to the Sultans of Egypt; there are the centre of the intrigues that Boudoc-Dari keeps up with the Moors of Morocco and the Moors of Spain. So that, besides his anxiety for Holy Cross, Saint Louis *may* wish to clear out a nest of pirates and brigands.

Saint Louis sails gallantly into the Bay of Tunis at the end of July. About this time a Moorish prince has undertaken the task of rebuilding Carthage; some new houses already begin to

show their heads among the blocks of ruins, a freshly built castle crowns the summit of the hill of Byrsa. The Crusaders are struck by the beauty of the country, covered as it is for miles with olive trees. Omar-el-Muley's conversion has already vanished into air. To the Christian salutations of King Louis he responds by a savage menace, that if one single Crusader lands, every single Christian subject of his in Tunis shall be momentarily massacred. But this menace has no effect on Saint Louis and his host. They land incontinent; they encamp in the Isthmus of Carthage, and the French King's almoner takes possession of the country of Hannibal, saying these words: "I say to you the ban of our Lord and of Louis, King of France, his serjeant." This same country and spot has heard spoken Getulian, Syrian, Vandal, Greek, and Arabic, and always expressing the same passions, couched in different tongues.

Saint Louis resolves to take Carthage before besieging Tunis; for Tunis is rich and strongly fortified. He drives the Saracens from a tower, which defends the cisterns of Carthage; he rases the new castle; in fancied security the stores of the expedition are disembarked, ultimately also the noble dames; and, by one of the revolutions that centuries bring round, the great ladies of France establish themselves among the ruins of the palace of Dido.

But fortune is fleeting, and fate is remorseless, and prosperity evanescent. Carthage is taken; but Tunis yet remains to be subdued, and Tunis cannot be taken without succours being received from Louis's brother the King of Sicily. Sweltering, perforce, on the sandy isthmus, the army is attacked by a contagious malady which, in a few days, diminishes its strength by one-half. The fierce African sun literally devours men accustomed to dwell beneath a mild and equably temperate sky. In order to augment the misery of the Crusaders, the Moors fill the air, by means of machines, with burning sand; in their infernal ingenuity they imitate the effect of the famous khan-sim or wind of the desert — an ingenuity worthy of the awful solitudes in which it has been engendered, showing to what pitch men can carry the genius of destruction. Continual combats

are dead; the King has seen expire in his arms his best beloved son the Count of Nevers. Then the arrow strikes him; and from that moment he knows that its wound its mortal, that the blow is sufficient to prostrate a frame already half-worn out by fatigue, mental and physical. Yet sincere in all other things—loving the truth above all—Saint Louis dissimulates now. He hides his illness from his courtiers and his people; he feigns vigour and cheerfulness while the hand of Death is weighing him down. Still struggling, and fighting Death with bold front and resolute mien, he goes daily and nightly the round of the hospitals. From holy works he passes to royal duties. The safety of the camp has to be looked after; an intrepid front has to be made to the Paynims; justice has to be rendered to the King's lieges, beneath the shadow of the King's tent-curtains, as in the old days beneath the oaks of Vincennes.

For days, Prince Philip, the eldest born and heir of Louis, has not quitted his royal father. He is at last obliged to keep his tent; then, thinking that the hours of his utility to his people are numbered, but that it behoves him to provide for their well-being even after his death, he writes his will. Ducange, the antiquary, has seen the manuscript in the saintly King's own writing. The characters are large, yet feebly traced; they are the weak expressions of a strong soul, for the will is full of wisdom, and goodness, and simple-mindedness, and sage advice to his son Philip for the well governing of the kingdom and people that are soon to be his.

On the Monday morning, the twenty-fifth of August, Saint Louis of France, being in extremities, demands and receives extreme unction; then he causes himself to be stretched on a bed of cinders, and—crossing his arms over his breast, and raising his eyes to Heaven—waits for death.

The sight has been seen but once, and never will be seen again.

The horizon becomes dotted with black specks—these specks are ships—these ships are the fleet of Charles of Anjou, King of Sicily, laden with arms and men and munitions of war for the Crusaders. The hills and plains around Tunis are swarming with the Moorish hosts; but in the camp of the Crusaders there is a dead silence; the only figures to be seen are wasted, emaciated, death-stricken soldiers slowly and painfully dragging themselves to the tent of their expiring king. Within that tent, towards the third hour of the afternoon, Saint Louis giving one sigh says, clearly and distinctly, these words, "Lord, I shall go into thine house and enter into thy temple!" and dies.

So ran my reverie of the Last Crusader. He was a Christian and a King worthy of better times and better deeds. Long the old knights and gentlemen who followed him were proud to say that they had been crusading with Saint Louis; "and I have had made," writes the honest Sire de Joinville, "an altar in honour of God and of 'Monsiegneur Saint Loys.'"

AN EXPLODED MAGAZINE.

SOME years, ten or a dozen ago, during the Repeal agitation conducted by the late Mr. O'Connell, an outburst of retrospective patriotism and poesy took place in a ballad furnished with the title, "Who fears to speak of 'Ninety-eight?" It was first published in a newspaper, and referred, I suppose, to the unhappy rebellion which in that year desolated the fairest portion of Ireland; but I have never read it, nor, beyond its title, have I anything more to do with it here. It awakens no partizan feelings within me, and might as well be the song of the Boyne Water, or the Shan Van Vaugh, Vinegar Hill, or Croppies lie down—intensely orange, or vividly green, for any effect it could have on my susceptibilities.

'Ninety-eight was not an *annus mirabilis*, although Nelson's great victory at Aboukir was won in its autumn. But every year was one of wonder then, and the age was one of marvels. Dynasties and thrones were being pounded up by the French armies like rotten bones in mortars. Wherever over the globe there were no wars, there were, at least, rumours of wars. And yet the world wagged, and the seasons came and went. There were as many wet and sunny days under republics as there had been under monarchies—in anarchy as in tranquillity. The months brought their same tributes of fruit, or flower, or grain; and were the same months, though the calendar had been remodelled, and they were henceforth to be Fructidors, Thermidors, or Ventoses. And it was the same death that kings suffered on the scaffold and soldiers in the field that a poor shepherd or a servant maid suffers to-day, and that you and I may suffer to-morrow. Sleeves and hose may alter, but legs and arms remain the same. Hunger was hunger and thirst thirst in 'Ninety-eight as it is in 'Fifty-three.

The other day, rambling about I stumbled upon an odd volume of an old Magazine for my favourite 'Ninety-eight. This was at a book-stall close to the Four Courts, Dublin; and I immediately became its possessor at the outlay of sevenpence sterling. The book-stall keeper, who was quite a Sir Charles Grandison of bibliopoles, politely offered to send my purchase home for me, but I took it to my habitat myself, and revelled in 'Ninety-eight half that night.

I found my Mag to be in the hundred and third volume of its age, a very respectable antiquity even in 'Ninety-eight; and, had it lived to the present day, it would have been a very Methuselah among Mags; but the work went the way of all waste paper, I am afraid, years ago. I cannot pretend to give you any detailed description of its contents; for, as per title-page they included letters, debates, antiquity, philosophy, mechanics, husbandry, gardening, fifteen more subjects, and "other arts and sciences," besides "an impartial account of books in several langueges," the "state of learning in Europe," and the "new theatrical entertainments" of 'Ninety-eight. And mark that my Mag was only a half-year's volume, from June to December. So I will say very little about philosophy or husbandry, the state of European learning, and the new theatrical entertainments of 'Ninety-eight, merely culling as I go on what seems to me curious, principally among the domestic occurrences of my year, and which may interest even those who have no peculiar solicitude concerning 'Ninety-eight.

First, I found a frontispiece elegantly engraved on copperplate, representing a wood or bosky thicket, in which reposed a lady in the costume of Queen Elizabeth, but much handsomer; behind her the poet Dante; by her side a lady in a Grecian costume, name unknown; and around her a lion, several sheep, and a rabbit. In the fore-ground a hideous dwarf in a fancy dress, whom I was uncertain whether to take for the fabulist Esop or the Polish Count Borulawski, was presenting a laurel wreath to a gentleman in a full-bottomed wig, large cuffs, ruffles, shorts, and buckles, who seemed very anxious to get the wreath indeed and was incited thereto by the poet Horace; who egged him on

with a large scroll, backed up by another gentleman, of whose person or dress nothing was visible but a very voluminous wig looming above his friend's shoulder, and was on that account perhaps intended as an allegory of Mr. Charles James Fox. On reference to my Mag for an explication of this engraving, I was informed that it was emblematic of Summer, and some lines from the Seasons followed the information; but, as I could not see what he of the wig and wig and ruffle had to do with summer and Queen Elizabeth, I considered it, and passed it over as a mystery of 'Ninety-eight, to be solved by future study and research.

Mrs. Muscadine writes to the editor during June, complaining of the mania for volunteering. She bewails the fact that her husband, and all the husbands of her acquaintance, have now the same squareness of the shoulders to the body and the front, their heels are all in a line, and their thumbs are all as far back as the seams of their trousers. She complains that her husband's affections are completely alienated from her by the rival charm of one Brown Bess, and that at prayer time he calls out "front rank, kneel!" for all of which she rates the Duke of York heartily, but good-humouredly. I wonder whether the re-embodiment of the Militia, or the recollections of Chobham, will call forth any Mrs. Muscadines in 'Fifty-eight. Next I find a long biography of John Wilkes. Wilkes died in the year before. In addition to his biography, my Mag has this month a notice of Dr. Farmer, the author of the Essay on the learning of Shakspeare, also deceased in 'Ninety-seven. In the House of Lords, on the twenty-eighth of March (my Mag only reports it in June), the Bishop of Rochester attributes the numerous applications for divorces, which have recently taken place in their lordship's House, to the Jacobinical principles which had been inculcated from France. In the House of Commons, on the third of April, on a motion for leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the slave trade at a period to be specified, which had been moved by Mr. Wilberforce, there are eighty-three ayes, and eighty-seven noes—majority for the middle passage, the barracoons, the bilboes, and the cartwhip, four.

April the twenty-fifth, in a social little committee of ways and means, Mr. Pitt moves for a trifle of twelve millions eight hundred and fifty-seven thousand pounds sterling for the army. He states, pleasantly, that he thought last Christmas that ten millions or so might have done; but that "into the particulars of that sum he will not now enter." Considerate, this, of the pilot that weathered the storm. To make things pleasant, he claps on, in the same cosy little commitee, "the additional tax upon salt," and the "additional duty upon tea," and the "tax on armorial bearings," "which," says Mr. Pitt, "rests upon a principle exceedingly different," which in truth it does.

Three-fourths of this month's number of my Mag are occupied with a narrative of the events of the Irish rebellion, and of the battle of Vinegar Hill. They belong to history.

On May the third the Whig Club dine together at the Freemasons' Tavern, London, Mr. Fox in the chair. They are all very merry, and Mr. Fox gives the "Sovereignty of the People" (the Habeas Corpus Act has just been suspended). The Duke of Norfolk, on his health being drunk, sensibly observes, that, "where the people have no rights, the nobility have no privileges worth enjoying;" and the Duke of Bedford in a neat speech intimates that the meeting is respectable. Mr. Erskine is rather glum; and when his health is drunk, coupled with "Trial by Jury," he contents himself with merely thanking the company, telling them that they know the reason why he is silent. Whereupon Mr. Sheridan (indefatigable in the pursuit of a joke under difficulties) gets up and proposes, "Our absent friend, the Habeas Corpus;" at which it needs no very retrospective effort of second sight to see the bumpers tossed off, and hear them jingled lustily by the Whig Club.

The suspension of "our absent friend" authorises, on the first of June, the arrest by Townsend the Bow-street officer, of Mr. Agar, a barrister, Mr. Curran (the son of the Curran), Mr. Stewart, and the Hon. V. B. Lawless (now Lord Cloncurry, and still alive I think), all under the authority of the Duke of Portland's warrant on a charge of treasonable practices. Failing our "absent friend," justice, in the shape of Mr. Townsend, lays

hold of Mr. Lawless's French valet and of his papers. Mr. Lawless was taken in St. Alban's Place, Pall Mall,—that peaceful, shady, tranquil little thoroughfare, hard by the Opera Arcade, the Patmos of half-pay officers. 'Tis as difficult for me to fancy an arrest for high treason in St. Alban's Place, as to picture the rotting skulls of Jacobites over Temple Bar; yet both have been almost within the memory of man.

On the seventh of June, three persons named Reeves, Wilkinson, and Adams, are hanged in front of Newgate. All for forgery. My Mag says that this was "the most awful example of justice ever witnessed." Doubtless; but the example, however awful, was not efficacious enough to prevent its repetition many many more times in 'Ninety-eight. On the eighth of June there is another awful example (though my Mag does not say so) on Pennenden Heath, one O'Coigley being hanged for high treason, in carrying on an improper correspondence with the French.

The next day dies, in Newgate, Dublin, of his wounds, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, son of the Duke of Leinster. On the twenty-first of May a proclamation offering a thousand pounds reward for his capture had been issued. Through the treachery of a servant-girl the place of his retreat was made known. A Captain Ryan, Mr. Swan, a magistrate, and the well-known Major Sirr, went with three coaches and some soldiers, as privately as possible, to the house of one Murphy, a feather-dresser, in Thomas-street. There they found Lord Edward lying on a bed, without his coat and shoes. He feigned, at first, to surrender; but a desperate struggle ensued, he being provided with a cut-and-thrust dagger. With this he gave Captain Ryan seven wounds between the collar and the waistband, and Swan the justice two. He was at last disabled by a pistol-shot from Major Sirr; overpowered, conducted to the castle, and thence to Newgate, where, as I have said, he died on the ninth of June. Captain Ryan died of his wounds two days before his prisoner. Major Sirr lived till within a short period of the present day. He was for many years one of the Dublin city magistrates, and sat in the Carriage Court to determine disputes and hear complaints against that eccentric race of beings, the Dublin car-drivers. He

was of course cordially hated by all the cabbies. One Jehu, a most inveterate declarer of the thing which was not, on being remonstrated with the usher of the Court for tergiversation (to use a mild word) retorted "Musha, then! Cock him up with the truth! It's more than I ever told the likes of him!" Singularly enough Major Sirr's last moments were spent among his enemies. He was taken mortally ill while riding in an inside car, and was scarcely carried from it before he died: it was even currently reported that he did actually die in the vehicle. A short time after his death a car-driver was summoned (or, as the carman calls it, "wrote by the polis") for stumping another whip, i. e. inveigling a fare away from him. "I wouldn't a minded his stumping me," said the complainant, "but didn't he call out, when the lady was getting into the kyar, that it was mine was the kyar that the black ould major died in? And one couldn't stand that, yer honour!"

In the month of July my Mag has great news from the Convict settlement at Botany Bay. Not the least curious among these is the notification of the appointment of the notorious George Barrington the pickpocket to be a peace-officer or superintendent of convicts—with a grant of thirty acres of land, and a warrant of emancipation. Barrington had rendered considerable service to the executive during a mutiny on the passage out, and since his arrival in the colony had behaved himself to the entire satisfaction of the authorities. I believe he died a magistrate, in easy circumstances, and universally respected.

But the most noteworthy item in this Antipodean budget, is the account of the opening of a theatre at Sydney; the manager (Mr. John Sparrow), the actors and actresses, and the majority of the audience, being convicts. Of the men Green, and of the women Miss Davis, best deserved to be called actors. The first performance appropriately commenced with "The Fair Penitent," and on another occasion "The Revenge" and "The Hotel" were presented. The dresses were chiefly made by the company themselves; but some veteran costumes and properties from the York Theatre were among the best that made their appearance. The motto of these histrionic exiles was modest and well chosen, being

visited by the banishment of the entire company to another settlement, there to work in chains. The coercive mastership of the revels is somewhat akin to the theatrical discipline in use in the Italian provinces under Austrian yoke, where refractory tenors are not unfrequently threatened with the bastinado by the military commandant, and prima donnas in their sulks are marched off to the guard-house between two files of Croat Grenadiers. The principal drawback to the prosperity of the Sydney theatricals seems, according to my Mag, to have been the system of accepting at the doors, in lieu of the price of admission, as much flour, beef, or rum, as the manager chose to consider an equivalent. It was feared that this would act like gambling, as an inducement to the convicts; and more serious evil arose in the frequent losses of watches and money by the respectable portion of the audience during the performances, and in the advantage some of the worst of the fair penitents took of the absence of the inhabitants at the theatre to break into their houses, and rob them of their contents.

On the twenty-eighth of July my constant Mag returns to the "Awful Examples." Two gentlemen, barristers and brothers, Henry and John Sheares, are hanged and decapitated in Dublin for high treason. At the last moment an urgent appeal was made to the Government for mercy, were it even to one of the brothers, and with an offer on their parts to make ample confessions; but the Government replied "That they had a full knowledge of everything that could come out in confession, and that the law must take its course." Which the law does.

July the twenty-first, William Whiley is flogged through the fleet at Portsmouth for mutiny on board Her Majesty's ship

Pluto. On the same day, Brian, for the same mutiny on board the same ship, is hanged at the yard-arm.

July the twenty-third McCann is tried for high treason in Dublin, as being the author of some treasonable papers found in the house of Mr. Oliver Bond. He is found guilty, sentenced to death, and hanged on the nineteenth of August. On the twenty-sixth, Michael William Byrne is also tried for the same offence, and the jury, after five minutes' consideration, find him guilty. He is impenitent, and exclaims, "with a warm accompaniment of action," that "he glories in the event of his trial." He is executed on the twenty-fifth of August. "Several other persons," adds my Mag, as if weary of particularising the examples, "have also been hanged for high treason during the present month."

On the thirty-first of July, the Blenheim, a whale ship, arrives at Hull from the Greenland seas. Passing Whitebooth Roads the Nonsuch and Redoubt men-of-war, guardships, fire several shot into her (as a species of welcome to England, home, and beauty, I presume), but without effect. Three boats are then manned and sent towards her, for the purpose of impressing the seamen of the Blenheim; but these opinionated mariners "agree to differ" from the men-of-war's men, and arming themselves with harpoons, Greenland knives, and spears, resolutely oppose their coming on board. The Nautilus sloop of war, having by this time joined the other two, also sends a boat, and fires more than thirty shot into her "with intent to bring her to," but without effect. A deadly struggle ensues; and the seamen of the whale ship fire a swivel, loaded with grape-shot, into the men-of-war's boats, and desperately wound two men and an officer; and at last their opponents row off. One of the wounded men dies in the hospital the next night, and the life of another is despaired of; whereupon, a coroner's jury sit on the body of the seaman deceased, and return a verdict of wilful murder against a person unknown. Meanwhile, the crew of the Blenheim have reached the shore and concealed themselves—none of them being wounded. I wonder, if any one of them had been killed, and the same coroner's jury had sat on the corpse, what would have been the verdict upon *him*. I must not omit to state that, the

John Palmer, a favourite actor, while enacting the part of "The Stranger" in the Liverpool theatre, drops down dead upon the stage. He is buried on the thirteenth, at Warton, near Liverpool, and on the tombstone (with questionable taste) are engraven these awfully significant words—

"There is another and a better world!"

My Mag, to add to the vulgar horror of the catastrophe, states that these very words were the last he uttered on earth; but a reference to the text of the Stranger will show that the words in question are in the part of Mrs. Haller.

On the sixth of September my Mag chronicles the result of six informations heard before the magistrates at Bow Street, London, and laid by the Stamp Office against a Mr. Williams, for suffering, in his room in Old Round Court, Strand, sundry persons to read the Daily Advertizer, and other newspapers, for the consideration of one penny each. The offence being held to be clearly made out, Mr. Williams is convicted in the penalty of five pounds on each information; "which is certainly sufficient," sagely concludes my Mag, to "convince the proprietors of reading-rooms that newspapers must not be among the number of the publications which they suffer to be read for hire, or, as they call it (my Mag is ironical), admission money." From which it would appear likewise that even penny news-rooms have had their persecutions and their martyrs. Ludicrously and inconsistently enough my Mag in thus pleasantly recording Mr. Williams's malpractices, does so in an "Historical Chronicle," clearly news, and taxable accordingly, but of which the Stamp Office does not take the slightest notice.

On September eleventh, at six o'clock in the evening, the north-east bank of the New River bursts near Hornsey-house, and inundates a circuit of four miles of meadow land.

On the seventeenth September, Robert Ladbrook Troys is tried for forgery. Guilty—Death. On the same day John Collins is indicted at the instance of the Stamp Office for forging a plate to counterfeit the "two shilling hat stamps." The principal evidence against him is that of a Jew, Barnard Solomons, who acknowledges his having suffered about two years previously three month's imprisonment for coining counterfeit halfpence. For the forgery of the "two shilling hat stamps," the verdict on John Collins is, Guilty—Death. The next day, the eighteenth, twenty-five men are tried on board the ship Gladiator, at Portsmouth, for mutiny. Nineteen are found Guilty—Death. Thirteen are executed; two are to have two hundred lashes; two one hundred; and one is acquitted. On the twentieth, Mr. Silvester, the common-serjeant at the Old Bailey, pronounces judgment (Death) upon ten men and four women. Twenty-six are to be transported, twenty-six imprisoned, and two whipped. And so from month to month 'Ninety-eight pursues the even tenor of its way. The "awful example" harvest is unvaryingly fruitful; but it would be wearisome to continue recording the statistics of each hemp crop.

Mr. Sabatier, impressed with the prevalence of poverty and crime in 'Ninety-eight, attempts to elucidate their causes. One great cause of poverty, according to this gentleman, is in "buying of unprofitable food." "Tea and bread and butter," he says, "is a very unprofitable breakfast for working people." Cheese and porter are still worse. "The former of these have very little nourishment, and the latter is costly." Unfortunately Mr. Sabatier does not point out the profitable food. A paramount cause of poverty is keeping a pig; "a pig, if it runs about, consumes time in looking after it; it frequently gets into the pound, and eats up the scraps of the family where there should be none; it occasions the boiling of victuals merely for the sake of the pot-liquor; and then this stunted, half-starved creature must be fattened." I wonder that in Mr. Sabatier's virtuous indignation

against the pig, he did not add, in aggravation of its crimes, that it squeaks in infancy and grunts when grown up, and that in feeding it puts its foot in the trough, quite ungenteelly. Giving children pence to buy tarts is, in Mr. Sabatier's eyes, a heinous offence, and invariably productive of poverty. He clenches his argument by a moral piece on the downfall of the eldest son of a peer, who was reduced by improvidence (beginning with penny tarts) to the sad necessity of enlisting as a common soldier.

The causes of crime, Mr. Sabatier ascribes, among others, to fixing the same punishment to different crimes, the greater of which has a tendency to conceal the lesser: To impunity as in unconditional pardon, or in commuting death into transportation: To the confinement of prisoners before trial in idleness and bad company: To allowing legal passages for escape: To proscribing a man's character by visible dismemberment, such as public whipping, the pillory, or the stocks: To legalising, or rather not prohibiting, pawnbrokers "and other receivers:" To permitting profligate characters to fill the religious ministry: To non-residence and neglect of incumbents: To permitting mendicity: To suffering seditionists to escape punishment: To allowing temptations to lie in the way of poor people, such as game and wood in forests: To the sale of spirituous liquors and lottery-tickets: To levying high duties on foreign commodities, and thereby encouraging smuggling. Among a variety of notions eminently germane to 'Ninety-eight Mr. Sabatier, as it will be seen, is in some respects many years in advance of it.

So I lay by my Mag for the present. Years hence perhaps our grandchildren may take up some exploded magazine for this present year; and, as they turn it cursorily over, wonder how such things, therein recorded, could ever have been. I sincerely trust, however, that little advanced as we may be, 'Fifty-three has not evinced any symptoms of retrogression towards 'Ninety-eight.

MYNHEER VAN PRIG.

WHATEVER could have brought Mynheer van Prig and your humble servant in contact? The world was surely wide enough for Prig and self. What unkind fortune, what capricious fate, what wilful wind, could have blown us together? I could well have done without Van Prig, and he might properly have done without me. I wanted nothing with the man: why couldn't he let me alone? If Van Prig had let me be, I should never have written this paper, and he—on my account at least—would never have been delivered over to the tormentors. Thus two (possible) evils would have been prevented. But the Pascal influences were against us. There was a cohobation of Sol with the White Dragon in Balneo Mariæ, and the result of the projection was Van Prig. Clotho, Atropos, and Lachesis, ruled otherwise. It was fated that Van Prig and I were to meet, and that we should both be sufferers from our very short acquaintance. May the public be the only parties that will derive any benefit from the disastrous connection of the non-undersigned with Mynheer van Prig.

He who travels much abroad, and is worth anything as a traveller, will scarcely fail to make himself, to the best of his ability, acquainted with the systems of jurisprudence which prevail in the countries he traverses. Landing in Barataria, one of our earliest visits should be to the plenary court, where his Excellency el Gobernador Don Sancho Panza sits full of wisdom and garlic. On crossing the Styx, the traveller is compelled to put in an appearance before Minos, C. J., and Justices Radamanthus and Æachus, in banco. It is true that a great many modes exist of performing this duty, and that the manner of studying the administration of justice in divers countries is infinitely varied,

Young Anacharsis is sometimes launched into a lawsuit so soon as he has set foot on Grecian shore; and I have heard of a ferocious tribe of island blackamoors whose strict, but simple, code compels them on a European making his appearance among them to seize him, try him by a banjo and tambourine head court-martial, and, on his being convicted of being white, to skin him alive, cook, and eat him. Prior to the first great French Revolution, if a foreigner died on the hospitable soil of France, the first intimation of the fact that reached his heirs was accompanied by the consoling intimation that the Most Christian King had condescended to exercise the eminently infamous prerogative known as the Droit d'Aubaine, and that his exempts had laid violent hands upon all goods and chattels, moneys and securities, belonging to the foreigner deceased. Again, there are some travellers whom an instinct of cruelty leads to watch and pry into the operation of the criminal law abroad. They are of the family of that horrible amateur of agony, George Selwyn, who, when the wretched Damiens was to be tortured, scarified, and dismembered, posted to Paris to witness the concluding bedevilment of the would-be regicide; and, desiring to be as near the scaffold as possible, gave his name to the sentinels who were keeping the crowd back as "Monsieur de Londres." They, knowing that the title "Monsieur de Paris" was shared alike by the archbishop-metropolitan and by the common-executioner, thought, reasoning from analogy, that the strange gentleman might be either the Primate of England or else the Sieur Jean Ketch on his travels, and so admitted him within the "inner ring," where he could witness, at his ease, the final atrocities. There are tourists in our days who experience a keen pleasure in hanging about the court of some Egyptian Cadi, to see some miserable fellah receive the bastinado. They pay five and twenty francs for the successor of Sanson to exhibit to them the dull red timbers and shining grooves of the guillotine. They go, at Nuremberg, to see the headsman's sword, with the hollow blade that holds quicksilver in its cavity, to drive the momentum from hilt to point; and, in Russia, their valet de place gives them timely intimation of some peculiarly invigorating administration of the

stick to refractory servants, or drunken donkey-drivers, in the yard of the police-office : or of some gala day, when the condign punishment of the knout is to be publicly inflicted in the horse-market at the top of the Newskoi perspective.

The master of the ceremonies who introduced me to Mynheer van Prig had LAW for his name, and was the criminal law of the constitutional kingdom of Belgium.

Nearly four years have passed since then. I don't exactly know why I had come to Brussels, save that I entertained a very great disinclination to return to England just then. All the spring and summer I had been wandering in the far north of Europe, and I thought I might as well wait until the first days of December, ere I went home. So, Paris having no charms for me at that period, I elected Brussels as a resting-place for eight weeks. I didn't know a soul in the city at first, which was remarkably nice. I discovered an acquaintance one day in the Place de la Monnaie, whom I suspected to have come over on an excursion to some international congress then being held in the capital of King Leopold. Him I discreetly avoided ; which was pleasant and convenient. True, when I had been in Brussels about a month I came suddenly across a real friend, who was camping out at the suburb of St. Josse-ten-Noode. I was obliged to go and dine with him and make believe to be intimate with his family ; but I soon contrived to get up a snug little quarrel with my friend—a querelle d'Allemand, or rather de Belge, for we neither of us knew precisely what it was about ; and then, after we had abused each other with the worst grace in the world, I was quite alone, which was delightfully humanising. At last it pleased Mynheer van Prig—and be hanged to him—to shunt himself across my solitary path.

For a time I enjoyed all the pleasures of a Low Dutch Zimmerman. It was so comfortable to be alone. I wouldn't have anything to do with the bad high-priced dinners at the spurious French restaurants in the Galerie St. Hubert, or the jangling tables d'hôte at the great hotels ; not I. But I dined royally in the Flemish manner at a little eating-house in a back street, that might have been the main cabin in a Greenland whaler, so greasy

was it, and where I had six courses of adipose matter, any quantitity of black bread and pickled vegetables, a plank of cheese of which the smell alone would have blown up Waltham Abbey if there were cheese instead of powder mills there, and a white wash-hand jug full of faro beer, such as would, for its sourness, have set all the grinders of the Giant Bolivorax, to say nothing of the teeth of a whole Port Royal full of ground sharks on edge—all for ninepence halfpenny. And it didn't make me bilious. I hadn't turned the corner of thirty years then. I played billiards or dominoes every night with people I didn't know, and liked to play with Walloons rather than with Flemings; for the reason, you see, that I understood a little Flemish, and that the Walloon tongue is one which nobody on earth, save the natives and deaf and dumb people, can speak. Sometimes, I went to the Maison des Brasseurs on the Grande Place, and breakfasted on a "Beuifsteackox," the orthography by printed placard adopted for the edible known in the country as a beefsteak. Sometimes I smoked a pipe on a dingy estaminet opposite the corner of the Rue de l'Etuve, and, looking upon the famous little Mannekin, wished I could be appointed his valet de chambre to dress him in his three suits a year—how do they get his netherstocks on?—and his cross of St. Louis; or that I could be his homme d'affaires to manage his handsome revenues in a snug bureau panelled with walnut-wood; and I wondered who the rich old maids and burgomasters could have been who had left legacies and yearly "rentes" to the "plus ancien bourgeois de Bruxelles." A great haunt of mine was a half-English tavern off the Montagne de la Cour, whither grooms, and broken-down baronets, and quarter-pay captains, and English raffs of every description came to read the *Times*, and talk about horses and bills, and drink the best Belgian substitute for English gin-and-water. And then I went home to some nice desolate quarters I had at a hairdresser's shop in the Rue de la Montagne. The hairdresser was a blind man, and his apprentice used to make faces at him in the interval of dressing those wigs on the dummies. The hairdresser's wife was ordinarily in tears; when her eyes were dry, she was in a storming passion, and thrashing her

children with a "martinet." I used to sing God save the Queen, in the endeavour to drown their yells, which disturbed the digestion of the six courses and the sour faro. My bedroom was like Mr. Punch's show; it was tall, narrow, and dark, and had but half a door covered with green baize. I had a charcoal stove in my sitting apartment, and nearly managed to asphyxiate myself with the fumes thereof. I had an effigy of a black Madonna with three hands, and a black bandino set in silvered copper, with a lamp swinging before it which had come from Keiff, and a fur coat that weighed about half a hundred weight, and a pair of boots four feet high, lined with sheepskin, and with which I used to compare notes at night. I had a quantity of books in half a dozen languages—"Ave, Tauchnitz! Imperator, te saluto!"—on the floor, and a quantity of loose tobacco on the furniture genegenerally; and I got up and went to bed at all hours; and, if I hadn't paid my rent in advance, I think the landlady must have imagined that I was mad. I had my complaints against her, too; for I am sure she made the pomatum in the vessels she used for cooking the dinner; and the mingled odour of bear's-grease and cabbage-soup was dreadful. I was to do a great deal of writing, and bought a large stock of pens and paper, and seven kinds of ink. I meant to paint some pictures illustrating recent foreign pilgrimages of my own, and I laid in large quantities of pigments and hog's-hair brushes; but I don't think I either wrote or painted much. The major part of my time at home was devoted to smoking, reading, and keeping a minutely accurate journal of the things I hadn't done. A young musical gentleman once came to my hermitage—which was on the fourth floor—with a letter of introduction from England; but I leaped up at him like a smoky Frankenstein, and soon gave that peaceful but obtrusive fiddler his quietus. Oh, it was a jovial time, a merry time! So merry, indeed, that I was often uncertain in my mind as to whether I should jump for joy and sing continual Te Deums, or whether I should pitch myself out of the fourth floor window, and dash my brains out against the flags of the Rue de la Montagne.

I owed no money in Brussels—and how, indeed, anybody can

get into debt where rent and food are so cheap, and where cigars are three for a penny, puzzles me. Else I might have become acquainted with the swift and sharp Creditor Law of Belgium, and have mingled with another section of English raffs, in the Maison de Détention pour Dettes. My "relations" with the police were of the most tranquillising description. I assured a stout gentleman in a glazed cap, at the passport office of the Petits Sablons, that I considered the Emperor Napoleon to be the greatest man this world has seen since Alexander of Macedon; and as I had just returned from the most absolutist country in Europe, I was probably looked on as a pacific character. So I took my walks abroad, unmolested, and made my first acquaintance with Belgian law one October afternoon, when, ascending the Montagne de la Cour, I witnessed the edifying spectacle of a little ragged boy—a pure Belgian gamin—being arrested by a police agent in plain clothes, for the flagrant misdeed of begging. The tiny criminal had ventured to accost an English lady and gentleman who were coming out of a lace shop, when a seeming well-to-do bourgeois, with green spectables and a drab broad-brim, rushed across the road, pursued the small ragamuffin among the wheels of several carriages and the hoofs of a squadron of Belgian heavy cavalry, and, at last, run him down on a pastry-cook's door-step. I never saw such an illustration of abject, exhausted terror, as in the boy as he sprawled panting on the step, holding up his ragged little arm as if to avert an expected blow. There was some sympathy evinced among the crowd that immediately collected, and a few murmurs reflecting on "les mouchards" were heard; but the police agent—and a very decent kind of man he seemed—put the case very fairly to us: that his orders were to arrest all vagrants and mendicants, and that the boy was captured, not to be punished, but to be sent to an asylum where he would be educated and cared for, till he was eighteen years of age. He took off his prisoner, and I went on my way: thinking that it was, perhaps, better, after all, to catch up these little beggars and lug them away to a place where they should be fed and taught, than to suffer them shamefully to roam in "all the desolate freedom of the wild ass" about the street of crowded cities, to grow up into wolves and tigers preying upon the body politic.

I was out late that evening and night, and walked many miles. It must have been near the Porte de Cologne, and at half-past one o'clock in the morning, that I met Mynheer van Prig.

Mynheer van Prig—I can see him now staggering along, and throwing a long lurching shadow in the bright moonlight—was either very tipsy, or else, for purposes of his own, simulated extreme inebriety. He caught hold of posts, and of chairs, and of trees, as he came tacking towards me, and, finally, he drifted up against and caught hold of me. He was at least six feet high —I won't say in his stockings, because subsequent discoveries proved him to be in the habit of wearing sabots without hose. He wore a very ragged blouse, and had a white flat face without beard or moustache, and, to the extent that a dirty Greek cap would admit of examination, without any perceptible hair on his head. He spoke very thick, which might have been his misfortune only, seeing that he was a Belgian; and he asked me, in execrable French, the way to the Cathedral of St. Gudule.

I told him, with my usual mildness, that he was some two miles distant from that ancient fane; whereupon with many a reel and hiccup, he suggested that I should treat him with beer or schnaps. I declined; whereupon he cursed me for an Englishman, and lurched away. It was not until he was some ten yards ahead of me, scudding away in the moonlight with a direct swiftness very unlike a tipsy man, that I discovered that this vallanous mynheer—he became then and there, and for ever afterwards, to my mind—Van Prig—had picked my pocket.

I had much better have let it alone, but I gave chase. I have run away from a good many things in my time—from love, from happiness, from myself—but I have seldom run away after anybody or anything. But I cried havoc, and let slip the dogs of war, after Van Prig: for the rascal had positively stolen all the money I had in the world. I think the available "all" amounted to about five-and-twenty francs, Belgian currency, contained in a morocco porte-monnaie; but this had, in addition, one compartment filled with what North of England people call "bonnie money:" an assortment of small change of a special nature which I had picked up during my wanderings. Thus, I had

a kreutzer, and a silver groschen, and a Danish rigsdaler, a pfenning, a five kopeck piece, a Hamburg mark, a piece with the effigy of the Hanoverian White Horse, and some minor testoons. Mynheer van Prig had got them all; and as I naturally set store by my five-and-twenty francs, and the pretty little tiny nickshaws of "bonny money," I ran after him.

Mynheer van Prig doubled; and we had an agreeable game of catch 'em who can, on the broad boulevard. I shouted "Police!" and "Au secours!" but all Brussels seemed to have gone to bed. Then, Mynheer van Prig took an unhandsome advantage of his size and my unreadiness, and, butting at me with his large head, very nearly knocked me off my legs. I am ashamed to say that in my ignorance of the noble art of self-defence, I caught hold of my adversary by the ears, and by the scruff of his neck, and by the collar and breast of his blouse, and that I strove to trip his long legs up: hanging on to him, meanwhile, like grim death, and bellowing "Au secours!"

It was destined to be a running fight throughout; for anon, and to my great joy, I descried another figure running towards us. Up he came at last, in a cocked hat and out of breath, and mild as the moonbeams, he summoned Mynheer van Prig, in the name of the king and of the law, to surrender.

How did he know that Van P. was the guilty party? I became ashamed of my opponent. There was surely never so rank a coward in the world as Mynheer van Prig. The police-officer was a mere atomy of a sergent de ville; and Prig, to judge by the size and length of his limbs, might have beaten us both, with one hand tied behind him. But he began, instead, to blubber like a great baby, about his "vamille."

I explained my loss, but the little policeman seemed to know all about it already. "Ca y est!" "That's it!" seemed his favourite expression. He chucked Mynheer van Prig almost caressingly under the chin, but shook his head, and said the money was not there. As for the porte-monnaie, it was settled that Prig had thrown it away, as a preliminary proceeding. "So, allons," said the little policeman blithely, "en route!"

He first, with much formality, went through the ceremony of

taking the big blubbering Belgian into custody. This he effected, by drawing a tapering little spit of a rapier and collaring Mynheer van Prig—having very nearly to stand on tiptoe to do it. We were admitted into Brussels by the men on duty at the Porte de Cologne, where the policeman showed his prize, and was complimented by the officials in Flemish. To me he spoke very decent French.

By this time I was heartily sick of Mynheer van Prig, and wanted, if possible, to get my money back, and go to bed. I made proposals that P. should restore the gems, or rather coins, of which he had robbed me, should receive a kicking and depart in peace; but this was a plan of which, though Van assented, the policeman would not hear. We must go before the commissary. It was a serious affair.

"And one that will be five years for thee, Gewaert," observed the policeman, cheerfully, to his prisoner, as we clattered down the empty streets.

The Mynheer, whose christian or surname might have been Gewaert, but who to me could be nothing but Van Prig, only gave some inarticulate moanings by way of reply.

"Bad seed, bad grain," the minister of justice went on, sententiously. "Thy mother stole catskins. Thy father wore rings on his legs for seven and ten. Thy sister is inscrite. Bad subjects, all. But Monsieur le Commissaire is about to rub thine ears for thee, galopin."

It is a fact, that when we reached the bureau of the commissary of police, and that functionary had got out of bed, and had come down stairs to his murky office in a flannel dressing-gown and a velvet skull-cap, and the charge had been briefly explained to him, that he so far put into practice the figurative language of the policeman concerning the rubbing of Mynheer van Prig's ears, as to seize him by the two shoulders and shake that rascal violently.

"Ah gredin! Ah cancre! Ah pied-plat! Ah saute-ruisseau! Ah voyou!" exclaimed the commissary, shaking his head and Mynheer van Prig at the same time. "We have got thee at last, have we? Thou wilt sell forged contremarques on the

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Place de la Monnaie, wilt thou? Thou wilt be a colporteur of seditious pamphlets? Now we have thee as a filou. Bon. Let him be peeled (qu'on l'épluche)," he concluded.

And upon my word they proceeded to "peel" Mynheer van Prig; and very much like a forked radish he looked when every rag—and they were few in number—he had on, was peeled off. Four five-franc pieces, presumably mine, and the whole of my "bonny money," of which I had "préalablement" given a description to the commissary, were found in the left sabot of Mynheer van Prig. There could be no doubt about that person's guilt.

The defence he pleaded, varied in its nature. First, he said that he had never seen me before; then, that he was as innocent as the child unborn; then, that it was somebody else; then, that I had given him the money to drink the health of the martyrs of Belgian liberty; finally, he burst into a fresh flood of tears, and, virtually confessing his offence, called it a "betite indiscrétion."

The commissary stigmatised his "voie de défense" as "odious." Mynheer van Prig was permitted to resume his peel, and was then locked up—somewhere underground, I presume. I signed a number of documents, bade the commissary good night, and was free to depart: when I made the agreeable discovery that my latch-key had disappeared. Either Van had stolen that too, and had thrown it away, or I had lost it during my short struggle with him. Most of the houses in Brussels have no concierges, but have street doors in the English fashion. I did not like to knock up the hairdresser's family; I was doubtful as to my reception—for the funds taken from Van Prig had been rigorously impounded by the commissary—at an hotel; and I was very glad, as an alternative to walking about the streets, to accept the offer of the policeman to make interest with the chef d'escouade at the guard-house at the Hôtel de Ville. There was, in an immense apartment, a roaring fire in an antique chimney here, and I dozed on a wooden camp-bed till seven in the morning: now fancying that I saw the Duke of Alva warming his toes by the blaze: now, that the nodding police-agents were the night watch that Rembrandt painted.

For a whole fortnight afterwards, I heard nothing whatever of Mynheer van Prig. The commissary had told me that when justice required my presence I should receive a "sommation;" and I dreaded the arrival of the missive. For fourteen days, however, as I have said, there were no signs of proceeding in re Prig. Yet the Mynheer haunted me. I had never prosecuted anybody before, and I hope I never shall again. I groaned in the spirit perpetually, about Mynheer van Prig. By night and by day his gaunt figure, his fat white face, floated before me. Prig was my Bottle Imp; and it was with a sensation, after all this horror, approaching relief, that on returning home one day, I learned from the landlady that a huissier had been after me with a sommation.

I think the entire hairdresser's family must have concluded that I had committed some dreadful crime: for the citation, or whatever it was, had to be served personally, and the usher dodged me about all that afternoon, before he could succeed in thrusting into my hand a species of placard, printed on coarse grey paper, and stamped all over in variously coloured inks, bidding me appear on a certain day before the Judge of Instruction of the First Tribunal of the Court of Assizes of Brabant, to give preliminary evidence against Jacobus Hendrik Vanderscamp, otherwise Gewaert, otherwise "Doppelfanger," otherwise "Pinchgelt," otherwise—and to me eternally—Mynheer van Prig.

I got this citation on a Saturday; on the Monday—the intermediate day was one of torture—I attended at ten o'clock in the morning at the Palais de Justice. In the backyard of that rambling whitewashed edifice I found a lonely door, giving access to a flight of filthy stone stairs, up three flights of which, an attenuated inscription informed me, were the "Cabinets de MM. les Juges d'Instruction." Previous to this, I had been allowed to cool my heels in a dreadful ante-chamber, much resembling a pauper dead-house; for it appeared there had been on the preceding evening a great robbery at a jeweller's in the Place de la Monnaie, and the Judge of Instruction, who was to take cognizance of myself against Van Prig, had gone down to the jeweller's in order to take "informations" on the spot. I had the pleasure,

too, of meeting the little policeman, who called my miserable matter "l'affaire de la Porte de Cologne," making as much of it as though it had been a gunpowder plot; and who in a whisper informed me that Van Prig had "arrived" and was "la-bas," indicating the locked door of a seeming coal-cellar. He also obligingly opened the door of the prisoners' van, which, having discharged its passengers, was waiting in the court-yard, and explained its internal economy to me. We groped about the narrow corridor of the carriage, and with a shudder I peeped into the cupboard with its narrow seat and a ventilator in the roof, which, but half an hour since, had held the captive body of Mynheer van Prig.

The tinkling of a little bell at length summoned me to the presence of the Juge d'Instruction: whom I found to be a portly magistrate, with a bald head, a black satin waistcoat, and a large bunch of seals. He was sitting in a comfortable apartment, half office, half sitting-room, and at the table opposite to him sat his greffier, or secretary, likewise portly, black satin waistcoated and gold-sealed, but not bald-headed. He looked like the judge's nephew, and he probably stood in that degree of relationship to him. I was bowed to, and offered a chair when I entered, and then judge and greffier, or uncle and nephew, began to chat about the jewel robbery, and politics, and theatricals, and the extraordinary fact of my being an Englishman. Now and then I was asked a casual question relative to my transactions with Van Prig; but at the end of some five-and-twenty minutes' desultory conversation, I was astounded to hear the greffier—who had been apparently scribbling caricatures on his blotting pad while we were talking—clear his voice and read a high-flown narrative, in the first person—my own—of the "Affaire de la Porte de Cologne." I think the exercitation commenced thus:

"I am unable to state with any degree of certainty whether it was on the right or the left side of the row of poplars opposite the Porte, dite de Cologne, that on the night, or rather morning, of——"

He went on for, I am sure, half an hour. Then, the pair having worked their wicked will on me, told me that I was to come

again that day week, to be confronted with the "prévenu," not yet "accusé" Van Prig; and that then I was to prepare myself to attend the Court of Assizes of Brabant, of which the sittings would probably take place one month thence. Then they gave me tenpence—a franc—for my "time." This I gratefully accepted, as an instalment on my five-and-twenty francs, and my "bonny money."

It was my own fault that I never recovered my property. I wonder where it is now, and what they did with Van Prig! I know perfectly well what I did. I happened to have a second passport in my possession, a right good Foreign-office one. The first, a mere Black Eagle affair, I allowed to slumber peacefully in the custody of the police, in its pigeon hole at the Petits Sablons. I went home, packed up my needments, made the landlady a psesent of the three-handed Madonna, purchased a lot of bear's-grease as a bonus for not stopping longer, and by the eight o'clock train from the Station des Bogards started for the town of Lille, in France. The tables were turned, and I had run away from Mynheer van Prig.

Was he convicted on the strength of my high-flown narrative? Was I condemned "en contumace" for cutting the prosecution, so far as I was concerned, "short?" Did Van Prig get off scot free? I have never been informed. I have passed through Brussels once since, on my way to the Rhine, but I didn't call upon "MM. les Juges d'Instruction" in their cabinets. I have had my pocket picked, too, occasionally, at Epsom, in the Strand, and on railway platforms, but I am delighted to say that the British Mynheer van Prig has always been clever enough, in my case, to defy pursuit and evade discovery, and that I have never since been subjected to the intolerable nuisance of prosecuting him.

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